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THE NEGRO:

His Rights and Wrongs,

The Forces For Him and Against Him.

BY

Rev. Francis J. Grimke, D. D.,

Washington, D. C.

“Right is right, since God is God,
And Right the day must win.”

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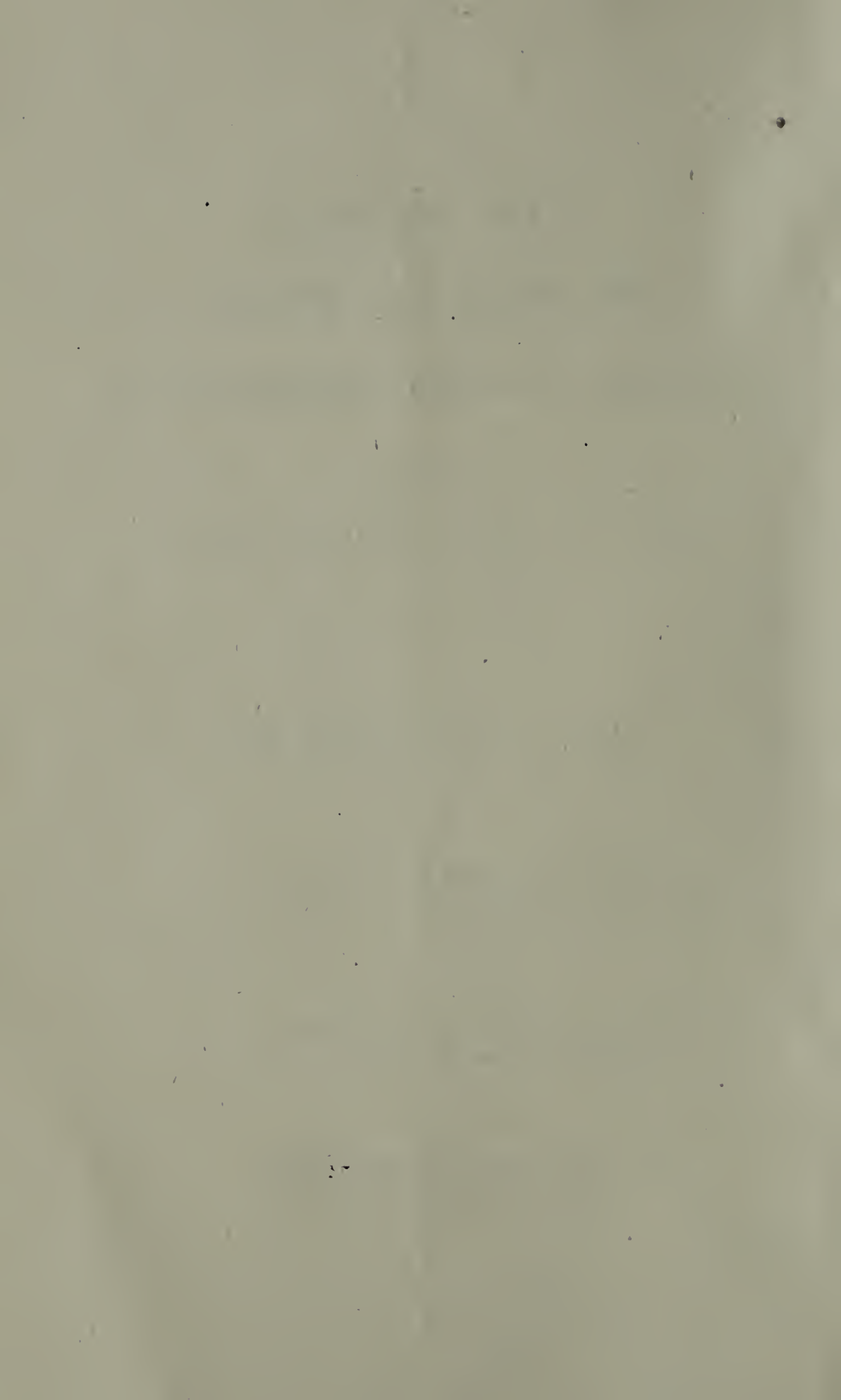
Washington, D. C.

“Right is right, since God is God,
And right the day must win.”

“Slow are the steps of Freedom, but her feet
Turn never backward.”

“Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet
'tis Truth alone is strong.”

“They enslave their children's children
who make compromise with sin.”



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These sermons were delivered in the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church, Washington, D. C., November 20th and 27th, and December 4th and 11th. They are published by request, and are sent forth in the hope that they may be blessed of God to the good of both races.

Sermon 1.

Discouragements. Hostility of the Press.
Silence and Cowardice of the Pulpit, Etc.

“Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart.”—Psalm 27:14.

DESPONDENCY is a state of mind in which all ~~feeling~~ ^{hope} seems to be lost—a feeling of discouragement, the disposition to give up, to cease to struggle. Such a state as Elijah fell into towards the close of his remarkable and stormy life. There is no more pathetically sad picture in the whole Word of God than that in which the prophet is seen in the wilderness sitting under a juniper tree—the very picture of despair. For years he had labored hard for the reformation of his countrymen. He saw the people rushing headlong into idolatry and every form of wickedness, and under the direction and inspiration of the Almighty, he threw himself with all the energy and impetuosity of his nature into the work of reforming them. Like all reformers, however, he met with opposition and indifference. But he kept pegging away, until at last success seemed about to crown his efforts. A great meeting was arranged to be held

at Mount Carmel, in which the point at issue was to be decided, and which resulted in favor of Elijah. The fire which fell from heaven, and which consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench, attested the divine approval of Elijah's course, and the power and superiority of Elijah's God. It was so interpreted by the people. The cry which it elicited from them was "The Lord, He is the God, the Lord, He is the God." The prophets of Baal, some four hundred, were slain without opposition from the people: and even the king seemed to have acquiesced in the victory at Carmel. Just as the prophet was congratulating himself, however, over the triumph of the right, his hopes were all blasted, and he was forced to flee for his life. The record is, "And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow by this time. And when he saw that, he arose and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; O Lord, take away my life; for I am no better than my fathers."

This wail of despair is again heard at the Mount of God, "And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and behold, there was a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb, the Mount of God. And he came thither into a cave, and lodged there. And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, and said unto him, what doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts, for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away." Elijah felt that if the three years and a half of famine, and the extraordinary and overpowering scenes which had been so recently witnessed at Carmel did not soften the hearts of the people and the rulers, and lead them to repent of their sins and do better, nothing would: and therefore, that it was vain to continue the struggle longer. "It is enough; O Lord, It is enough." That is, there is no use of trying any longer. The picture presented here

becomes still more striking when we remember the sturdy character of the man of whom we are speaking. He was no reed shaken by the wind, no weakling; but a man of great strength of character, and of remarkable courage. He was not afraid to confront Ahab, though he knew he had been in search of him everywhere, with the murderous intent of putting him to death. Nor was he afraid when he met him to speak plainly and in terms to rebuke, "I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baal." And yet, it is this grand old warrior, this man of a hundred battles, this man who was a host in himself, and whose presence is symbolized by chariots and horses of fire, in the scene where he is translated, who sinks into despair, who is overwhelmed by the seemingly insurmountable obstacles with which he is confronted.

Moses, also came very near sinking into a similar state, if indeed he did not actually fall into it, under the crushing weight of solemn responsibilities which rested upon him as the divinely appointed leader of the people in their exodus from Egypt. It was a tremendous responsibility to lead two millions of people out of bondage, especially in the condition in which the Israelites were—ignorant, besotted, with little appreciation of the blessings of freedom, who cared more for the

fleshpots of Egypt than they did for liberty, for independence. The result was, before they had gone very far trouble began ; they began to murmur, to find fault, to regret that they were ever disturbed in their Egyptian homes, where they had plenty to eat and drink, and which seemed a paradise to them compared to the experiences through which they were then passing. The record is, "And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a-lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who will give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: but now our soul is dried away—there is nothing at all besides this manna, before our eyes. Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: And Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? And wherefore have I not found favor in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldst say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom as a nursing father beareth the suckling child, unto the land which thou swearest unto their fathers? Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh that we may eat. I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too

heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in thy fight ; and let me not see my wretchedness." Here is also the wail of a soul on the verge of despair. Like Elijah his cry also is, It is enough, take away my life. David also knew what it was to be depressed. In the forty-second psalm, and fifth verse, we read, " Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me ?" And again, " O my God my soul is cast down within me." And, into this frame of mind, we are all liable to fall at times ; doubtless some of us already know from sad experience what it is to be dejected, cast down, despondent.

I have touched upon this subject this morning because as a people, I am afraid, there is danger, in view of the terrible ordeal through which we are now passing, and have been passing for some time, of losing heart; of coming to feel as Elijah did, It is enough : there is no use of continuing the struggle.

The way is certainly very dark. There are many things to discourage us ; but there is a brighter side to the picture, and it is of this side that I desire especially to speak. Before doing so, however, it may be well for us to notice in passing some of the things which seem to indicate the approach of a still deeper darkness.

And first, lawlessness is increasing in the South. After thirty-three years of freedom, our civil and

political rights are still denied us ; the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments to the Constitution are still a dead letter. The spirit of opposition, of oppression, of injustice is not diminishing but increasing. The determination to keep us in a state of civil and political inferiority and to surround us with such conditions as will tend to crush out of us a manly and self-respecting spirit is stronger now than it was at the close of the war. The fixed purpose and determination of the Southern whites is to negative these great amendments, to eliminate entirely the Negro as a political factor. And this purpose is intensifying, is growing stronger and stronger each year. The sentiment everywhere is : This is a white man's government. And that means, not only that the whites shall rule, but that the Negro shall have nothing whatever to do with governmental affairs. If he dares to think otherwise, or aspires to cast a ballot, or to become anything more than a servant, he is regarded as an impudent and dangerous Negro ; and according to the most recent declaration of that old slaveholding and lawless spirit, all such Negroes are to be driven out of the South, or compelled by force, by what is known as the shot-gun policy, to renounce their rights as men and as American citizens.

This is certainly a very discouraging condition of things, but the saddest aspect of it all is, that there are members of our own race— and not

the ignorant, unthinking masses, who have had no advantages, and who might be excused for any seeming insensibility to their rights, but the intelligent, the educated—who are found condoning such offenses, justifying or excusing such a condition of things, on the ground—that in view of the great disparity in the condition of the two races, anything different from that could not reasonably be expected. Any Negro who takes that position is a traitor to his race, and shows that he is deficient in manhood, in true self-respect. If the time ever comes when the Negro himself acquiesces in that condition of things then his fate is sealed, and ought to be sealed. Such a race is not fit to be free. But thank God the cowardly, ignoble sentiment to which I have just alluded, while it may find lodgment in the breast of a few weak-kneed, time serving Negroes, is not the sentiment of this black race. No, and never will be. During all these terrible years of suffering and oppression, these years of blood and tears, the Negro has been shot at, his property destroyed, his family scattered, his home broken up; he has been forced to fly like the fugitive for his life before the hungry bloodhounds of Southern democracy; everything has been done to terrorize him, to keep him from the polls. In some cases he has stayed away; in others he has gone straightforward in the face of the bullets of the enemy and has been shot down. Hundreds of the men of our race

have laid their lives down on Southern soil in vindication of their rights as American citizens. And shall we be told, and by black men, too, that the sacred cause for which they poured out their life's blood is to be relinquished, that the white ruffians who shot them down were justified, that in view of all the circumstances it was just what was to have been expected, and therefore that virtually we have no reasonable ground of complaint? Away with such treasonable utterances—treason to God, treason to man, treason to free institutions, treason to the spirit of an enlightened and Christian sentiment. The Negro is an American citizen, and he never will be eliminated as a political factor with his consent. He has been terrorized and kept from the polls by bloody ruffians; but he has never felt that it was right; has never acquiesced in it, and never will. As long as he lives, as long as there is one manly, self-respecting Negro in this country, the agitation will go on, will never cease until right is triumphant. It is one thing to compel the Negro by force to stay away from the polls; it is a very different thing for the Negro, himself freely, of his own accord, to relinquish his political rights. The one he may be constrained to do: the other he will not do.

Another discouraging circumstance is to be found in the fact, that the white people of the North, to a very large extent, are either indifferent to these wrongs or are in sympathy with them.

Many of those who were once our best friends, who stood by us during the great struggle for freedom, before and immediately after the war, are now on the other side. The Negro-hating spirit of the South has diffused itself all over the North. Even the children of the old abolitionists have been won over to a large extent, and are now found among our detractors, and the apologists for Southern outrages. Everywhere under this baleful Southern influence, there is a growing contempt for the Negro, and a growing disposition to regard him as an alien, to make him feel that he is not wanted. Even in our institutions of learning, the children of white professors, who earn their living by teaching colored pupils, are sometimes found avoiding him and looking contemptuously upon him.

Another discouraging circumstance is to be found in the fact that the press of the country is against us, with a few honorable exceptions. And when we remember what the power of the press is, we can see just what that means, how much more difficult it becomes for us to make any headway, or to create a favorable impression. The good that the Negro does as a general thing is passed over in silence, or is but slightly noticed, or when noticed is pushed off in some obscure corner where it will not be likely to attract attention, while the evil that he does, or is supposed to do—the evil that is laid to his charge, often without any foundation in

fact, often resting upon a bare suspicion—is given the most prominent place, and set forth in glaring head lines, the whole purpose being to create a sentiment against him, to render him contemptible in the eyes of the country. Its attitude towards the Negro is that of the Pharisee to the publican, in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. It is all the time saying, See how superior we white people are, and how mean and despicable these Negroes are. And it does it, I say, for the purpose of discrediting the Negro. There is no disposition on the part of the press, to give the Negro a hearing, or to mete out justice to him. Even when he comes forward in his own defense, it is with difficulty that he can get a hearing. The simple fact is, the Negro is unpopular, and as the press lives by pandering to popular taste, it seeks to dress the Negro up in a way that will meet this demand, or that will harmonize with this sentiment. So that as long as public sentiment is what it is, we may expect to be misrepresented and villified in the public journals. It is a popular thing to be down on the Negro, and the press is bound to be on the popular side—the religious press as well as the secular press: for the Negro fares as badly at the hands of the one as the other.

Another discouraging circumstance is to be found in the fact that the pulpits of the land are silent on these great wrongs. There are nearly a

hundred thousand white ministers in this country. According to their own profession, they are God's representatives: and the function of the ministry, as set forth in God's Word, is to cry aloud and spare not, is to lift up a standard for the people. And yet, as a matter of fact, it is the rarest thing in the world to hear a word from these pulpits against the terrible crimes which are being perpetrated in this land against the Negro. Whether this is the result of cowardice—the fear of offending those to whom they minister, and upon whom they are dependent for their bread and butter—or whether it is because they see nothing to condemn, think the Negro is receiving just what he deserves; or whether it is the result of indifference, I do not know. I simply note the fact. This much may be said, however, they are not silent on other matters. We hear a great deal from these same pulpits about the Liquor Traffic, about gambling, about Sabbath desecration, about the suffering Armenians. When the question of suppressing polygamy in Utah was up, they had a great deal to say. When the question was up about suppressing the Louisiana Lottery they also had a great deal to say, and many of them rang out in eloquent appeals in favor of wiping out that great gambling scheme, which had done so much to debauch the people. And when the question was raised about opening the Columbian Exposition on the Sabbath, what a tremendous furor it created in these pulpits; the

whole land echoed and reechoed with the sound of clerical voices, with the thunders which proceeded from these lofty watch-towers on the walls of Zion. But when it comes to Southern brutality, to the killing of Negroes, and the despoiling them of their civil and political rights, they are—to borrow an expression from the prophet Isaiah—“dumb dogs that cannot bark.” And they are dumb not because they are ignorant of the actual condition of things. Ministers are men of intelligence. They take the papers. They read the news—they are more careful to do that, often, than they are to read their Bible. They are, as a class, well informed; they know what is going on about them. And yet, as a general thing, not a word is ever uttered by them, either in their sermons or in their prayers, that would lead any one not acquainted with the facts, to suppose that there was anything wrong in the treatment which we are receiving in this country. Read the sermons that are published in the daily and weekly papers, and in the homiletical magazines, by the great lights of the pulpit, and very rarely will you find any reference to the subject, or anything said that would tend to create a sentiment inimical to such outrages. Some years ago, the M. E. Church at its General Conference passed a series of resolutions condemning these outrages: and the Presbyterian General Assembly did the same—some of the churches haven't done even as much as that; but we have heard

nothing of these resolutions since. There is no evidence that the men who advocated them and voted for them ever did anything from their pulpits, or in their respective spheres of influence, to arouse the public conscience in reference to these wrongs, with a view of righting them. The fact that these terrible outrages continue in the South, that lawlessness is increasing instead of diminishing, that the spirit of bitterness against the Negro is more pronounced and violent now than ever before,—notwithstanding there are hundreds and thousands of ministers in that land of blood preaching Sabbath after Sabbath to these very people, who are either directly guilty of these crimes, or who by their silent acquiescence encourage them, is proof positive that the Southern pulpit, at least, has been recreant to duty, false to the God whom it professes to represent. And the fact that the North looks on in silence, sees these wrongs without vigorously protesting against them, is proof positive that the Northern pulpit is equally recreant to duty, equally false to the high trust which has been committed to it as the mouth-piece of God. The power for good of a hundred thousand men of the intelligence and social standing and influence of these ministers, representing as they do a constituency of fully twenty millions of professing Christians, and an equally large constituency of non-professing and congregational members, cannot be overestimated when *properly*

exercised. This I feel has not been done. If these hundred thousand men had done their part, had taken the pains to set clearly before the people their duty in this matter, as defined in God's Word, and as required by the principle of right, of justice, which makes it obligatory upon us to render to every man his due, to do by others as we would be done by, and to love our neighbor as ourselves, the prospect before both races would be very much brighter than it is to-day. The Southern savages who have been sinking lower and lower during these years in barbarism, would by this time have become somewhat civilized, and the poor Negro, instead of being hunted down like a wild beast, terrorized by a pack of brutes, would be living amicably by the side of his white fellow-citizens, if not in the full enjoyment of all of his rights, with at least a fair prospect of having them all recognized. The white pulpits of the land are largely responsible for the continuance of this unfortunate condition of affairs. Their silence as the representatives of religion, as the highest exponents of morality, and as a class of men, especially set apart for the defense of the faith, and for all that that faith implies and requires in the way of righteousness and truth, of justice and humanity, is a tacit admission on their part that these outbreaks of lawlessness, these insults and indignities that are heaped upon the Negro, and because he is a Negro, are right—that

they see nothing in them to condemn, nothing inconsistent with the religion which they profess : or else, that though they see these things to be wrong, they are afraid to lift up their voices against them. In either case, whether their silence is the result of cowardice, or of blunted moral sensibility, it has operated equally against us. This is the charge I make against the Anglo-American pulpit to-day. Its silence has been interpreted as an approval of these horrible outrages. Bad men have been encouraged to continue in their acts of lawlessness and brutality. As long as the pulpits are silent on these wrongs, it is in vain to expect the people to do any better than they are doing. It would be a good thing if we could have a day of special prayer for the pulpits of our land, North as well as South ; that God would put into them a little more backbone and strength of character and conscientiousness ; that he would fill them with men who love righteousness and hate iniquity ; men who are not afraid to do their duty, or to suffer, if need be, in the cause of truth and justice. A cowardly ministry is a curse to any nation, and always makes it harder, more difficult, for the oppressed to overcome oppression. If therefore, as a people we have any power with God, there ought to be a special effort made to bring that power to bear upon the weakness and cowardice of the American pulpit. You remember how it was with Peter. He was afraid

even to acknowledge that he knew Jesus—afraid lest some evil should befall him, lest he should be persecuted, thrown in prison, or put to death. But after the day of Pentecost, when the spirit like a rushing mighty wind came upon him, all fear vanished. He was not afraid to face the chief priests and the elders, the scribes and the Pharisees, and all the allied forces of the enemy. He stood before them undaunted, and met their threats of violence with the declaration, "We ought to obey God rather than man, We will obey him, come what will." And this is the spirit we need to-day in the American pulpit. We need a living ministry—a ministry endued with power from on high, baptized with the Holy Ghost—a ministry that knows no fear, but the fear of God. With such a ministry, with such men filling the pulpits of our land, in a decade there would be a revolution in public sentiment. This terrible floodtide of iniquity, this deluge of crime, of violence, of lawlessness against the Negro would be arrested. The trouble is, even in the churches over which these ministers preside, which should be holy ground, where no man should be known by the color of his skin, prejudice is often the strongest. And for this, the ministry is in a large measure responsible. It is due, or at least, its continuance is due, in nine cases out of ten, to ministerial unfaithfulness. Let us pray earnestly therefore, that this source of power—for the ministry is a

source of power, and of great power—may be purified and quickened, and be made to do the work which God intended it to do, in leading, directing, and moulding public sentiment in the interest of truth, justice and humanity.

Joseph Parker, the great London preacher, in his People's Bible, which is designed to be a popular exposition of God's Word, speaks with great clearness of the true function of the ministry in regard to wrongs of every description, and denounces in the strongest terms the cowardly, time-serving preacher. "Moses, he says, "saw that the conditions of life had a moral basis; in every quarrel, as between right and wrong, he had a share, because every honorable-minded man is a trustee of social justice and common fair play. We have nothing to do with the petty quarrels which fret society, but we certainly have to do with every controversy, social, imperial, or international, which violates human right, and impairs the claim of Divine honor. We must all fight for the right: we feel safer by so much as we know that there are amongst us men who will not be silent in the presence of wrong, and will lift up a testimony in the name of righteousness, though there be none to cheer them with one word of encouragement." Again he says, "the trumpets were to be sounded by the *priests*. The priests are not likely to sound many trumpets to-day. Ministers have been snubbed and silenced into an awful acquiescence

with the stronger party. The pulpit should be a tower of strength to every weak cause. Women should hasten to the church, saying—Our cause will be upheld there. Homeless little children should speed to the sanctuary, saying, We will be welcomed there. Slaves running away should open the church door with certainty of hospitality, saying, The man who stands up in that tower will forbid the tyrant to reclaim me, or the oppressor to smite me with one blow. It was God's ordination that the trumpet should be sounded by the priests—interpreting that name properly, by the teachers of religion, by the man of prayer, by the preachers of great and solemn doctrines; they are to sound the trumpet, whether it be a call to festival or to battle. We dare not do so now, because now we have house-rent to pay, and firing to find, and children to educate, and customs to obey. Were we clothed in sackcloth, or with camel's hair, and could we find food enough in the wilderness, were the locust and the honey sufficient for our natural appetites, we might beard many a tyrant, and decline many an invitation, and repel many an impertinent censor: but we must consider our ways, and balance our sentences, and remember that we are speaking in the ears of various representatives of public opinion and individual conviction. The pulpit has gone down. It has kept its form and lost its power; its voice is a mumbling tone, not a

great trumpet blast that creates a space for itself, and is heard above the hurtling storm and the rush of hasteful and selfish merchandise. Were ministers to become the trumpeters of society again, what an awakening there would be in the nation. Were every Sabbath day to be devoted to the tearing down of some monster evil—were the sanctuary dedicated to the denunciation,—not of the vulgar crimes which everybody condemns, but the subtle and unnamed crimes which everybody practices,—the blast of the trumpet would tear the temple walls in twain. We live in milder times—we are milder people: we wish for restfulness. The priests wish to have it so also—like priest, like people. The man who comes with a trumpet of festival will be welcomed; the man who sounds an alarm will be run away from by dyspeptic hearers, by bilious supporters, and by men who wish to be let alone.”

And still again, he says, “The man who sells his principles, who keeps quiet in critical times, lest he should bring himself into difficulty, or subject his business to loss—it shall be more tolerable for the heathen man in the day of judgment than for that Christian traitor. Every day we are selling Christ, every day we are crucifying the Son of God afresh, and putting him to open shame; and yet at a missionary meeting how some men gather themselves together and chuckle with pious hypocrisy over the poor deluded idolator who part-

ed with his stone God for gold. Men do not think of these things. When you smothered your convictions, you sold your God. When, instead of standing square up, and saying, I will not, that you might save your situation, or your family from starvation, you bartered your God for gold. I cannot sit quietly and hear the heathen laughed at because they take off their little rosaries and sell them for money. They know no better. That very parting with the rosary may be a step in the upward direction, when the whole solution is before us. But as for us, to be dumb in the presence of evil, to turn away lest we should bring ourselves into scrapes and difficulties because of standing up for the oppressed,—for us to smooth down the accusation of Christianity by saying that the church we go to is the most respectable in the neighborhood,—that is a lying which the blood of Christ itself may hardly be able to expunge.” And this is the gospel,—the gospel of uncompromising fidelity to the right,—regardless of consequences, that is most needed in the American pulpit to-day.

But this is not the saddest and most discouraging aspect of the problem, viewed in the light of the attitude of the pulpit toward it. Its silence is bad enough, but when it is found, as it is at times, breaking that silence, only to apologize for and to condone these outrages, it makes the burden which this poor race has to bear all the harder, and increases the difficulties in the way of a rightful

solution of this problem. Some years ago, you will remember, no less a man than Bishop Fitzgerald of the Southern Methodist Church, came forward as an apologist for Southern barbarism. And now in the face of the awful, the unspeakable crimes that were committed at Wilmington, N. C., where Negroes were terrorized, driven from their homes, shot down, murdered, their property destroyed; where the government was forcibly wrested from the hands of the lawfully constituted authority by a band of lawless murderers and ruffians, it is a representative of the pulpit, in the person of the Rev. Dr. Peyton H. Hoge, who comes forward as the apologist. The Sunday after these bloody murders were committed, after this carnival of death, after these white fiends had been turned loose upon the community, and had trampled under their feet, the ballot, free speech, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness—every interest that was sacred to man—when we had a right to expect every pulpit, not only in that city but throughout the land, to thunder and lighten against the hideous wrong, this man stood up in the sacred desk, on the Lord's day, and commended the white people for "their gallant conduct in redeeming the city for civilization, law, order, decency and respectability;" and congratulated them upon the fact that "their homes remained in peace, and their wives and daughters were free from insult." He also justified the de-

struction of the Negro Daily Record Office, "as a stern necessity to teach the Negro a lesson for the good name of the wives and daughters of white men."

It is just such whited sepulchres, such hypocrites in the pulpit, that have always stood in the way of progress, and that have brought the religion of Christ into contempt. It was just such hypocrites which Jesus had in mind when he uttered those awful words of denunciation in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew:—"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law,—judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel. Fill ye up the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" "The damnation of hell," are the words of Jesus himself: and if this damnation is reserved for any one, or any class of men, it certainly is for

men of this stripe,—men who dare to stand up in the pulpit, and in the sacred name of the holy religion of Jesus, commend such brutality, such inhuman conduct, such utter lawlessness.

But here I must stop. I shall hope on next Sabbath to finish what I have to say. This is the time for every pulpit to speak out, and to speak in no uncertain tone; the time when as a people we should get closer together, and understand each other, and prepare for the future. It is no time for cowards, and sycophants, and time-servers, but for men, who know what their rights are, and who are willing, if need be, to die in their defence.



Sermon II.

Sources from which no help may be expected,—the
general government, political parties, etc.

“Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall
strengthen thine heart.”—Psalm 27:14.

THE history of our people in this country has
been a sad one. For nearly two hundred and
fifty years, from 1619 to 1863, from the landing of
the first cargo of slaves at Jamestown to the issu-
ing of the Emancipation Proclamation and the sur-
render at Appomattox, we were subject to a most
cruel and oppressive bondage. The history of
those days can never be fully written. We get a
little glimpse into them through such works as
“Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” “Dred,” “The Key to Uncle
Tom’s Cabin,” “A Thousand and One Witnesses,”
by Theodore D. Weld; and through the files of such
papers as the Liberator, the Anti-slavery Standard,
The North Star, and from the sad stories which
many of us have heard from the lips of those who
were the victims of the slave power. But after
every syllable has been read of all that has been
written in books and papers and magazines, on the
sorrows and sufferings of that period, the impres-

sion we get falls far short of the reality. God only knows it in its entirety, and is alone able to fully appreciate and take in all the heartaches and sorrows and sufferings, and sad experiences that entered into the history of those two hundred and fifty years.

With the close of the war, ended this first sad chapter in our history. For the time being the past was forgotten in the rejoicings of freedom. Never before in the history of this country were there such widespread expressions of joy as came with the death of slavery and the liberation of the slaves. No people ever before in the history of the world showed a keener appreciation of the gift of freedom. The whole land was vocal with music. The day of jubilee had come, not only for the black man, but for all lovers of freedom the land over. Who can ever forget those days, and the scenes of rejoicing which took place all over the North and South. The sighs and tears and groans of the slave were no longer heard. All was joy, all was gladness. It seemed, indeed, as if our troubles were all over.

Thus began the second chapter in our history in this country. First came freedom, and then, citizenship; and last of all the ballot. Then began the period of reconstruction, when for the first time in the history of the country the Negro was felt as a political factor. In nearly all of the old slave states, under Northern white leaders, his

power was felt. He was found in state legislatures, and in other high and responsible positions, and even in the Senate of the United States and in the House of Representatives. Everything seemed propitious,—the Negro was on the crest of the wave, a new era of prosperity seemed really to have set in. But during the Hayes Administration the scene rapidly changed: the Republican party in the South, with the Negro as its main support, was deserted by the national government,—the troops were withdrawn. And with their removal began a reign of terror, which has been one of the foulest blots upon our civilization. The old slave holding element reasserted itself, and by Ku-Klux Klans, and other murderous organizations, the Negro was hurled from political power, where he has remained ever since, and where so far as I can see, he is likely to remain for a long time to come.

With the end of Republicanism in the South, began the third chapter in our history,—a chapter which has been fraught with evils as great, and sufferings as intense as the first, if not greater. The elective franchise, with which we were clothed as a means of protecting ourselves, and which seemed at the time, one of the greatest of boons, has, as a matter of fact, entailed upon us an inheritance of suffering before which we stand appalled, especially in view of the recent bloody acts of lawlessness in North and South Carolina.

When the Negro was caught by slave-hunters and torn from his home in Africa, and transported to this land, to become a mere beast of burden, a thing to be bought and sold, to be kicked and cuffed about at the will of another, it was easy enough to see what the outcome would be. The record of those dreadful years of enforced ignorance and suffering was just what was to be expected. But when the Fifteenth Amendment was passed, conferring upon him the right to vote, who would have thought, that in virtue of that power, there was yet before him such a period of suffering as that through which he has been passing for the last two decades, and through which he is still passing? Who would have thought, that in virtue of that power, which lay at the very foundation of republican institutions, that hundreds and thousands would be shot down, and others driven from their homes, their property destroyed, and their most sacred rights as men and citizens, outraged? And yet, such has been the fact. During the short period of freedom since the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment, it has been estimated that more Negroes have been murdered, shot down like dogs, than during the whole two hundred and fifty years of slavery. Read the awful records of the Ku-Klux investigations: read the heart-sickening reports that come to us almost every day from the South of the brutal lynchings and other atrocities that are constantly occurring, if you would under-

stand what these sufferings are. And they are the result, or very largely the result of political hatred. It is because the Negro dares to exercise his right as an American citizen, because he is unwilling to become a political nonentity, or a mere tool in the hands of the Southern whites. The feeling is,—either he must be controlled, must be willing to do what he is directed to do by his self-appointed white masters, or else he must not be permitted to vote at all. Any exhibition of manhood, of independence, on his part is resented, is looked upon as an impertinence. As he grows in intelligence, in wealth, in self-respect,—as he becomes more self-assertive,—as the consciousness of what belongs to him, and the disposition to claim his right, develops, the greater is the disposition to crush him. This feeling is especially strong in the South, but is also beginning to manifest itself all over the country. The aspiring Negro, the Negro who comes forward and says, I want an equal chance in the race of life, who says, I am a man, and you must treat me as a man, is the unpopular Negro, the Negro that nine white men out of every ten want to see put down. With this fact staring us in the face, and with the facts, referred to in my sermon on last Sabbath,—the increasing spirit of lawlessness in the South, the growing unfriendliness of Northern whites, the hostile attitude of the press, and the silence and cowardice of the pulpit,—the way certainly looks pretty dark,

and forces upon every thoughtful Negro the question, What is to be the outcome of all this? What is to be the end? Are things to go on from bad to worse, or is there to be a turn in the tide? I, for one, believe there is to be a change for the better. In the midst of the gathering darkness, I see indications which point to a brighter future. Every cloud has a silver lining. The darkest hour is just before the day. There is a silver lining to this heavy black cloud that hangs over us to-day. This night of murder, of lawlessness, of outraged decency, of inhumanity, will not always last. The silence of the pulpit, the hostility of the press, the unfriendliness of Northern whites cannot continue; conscience will one day get the victory, the Right will prevail, will rise up in its might and smite down the oppressor.

“Some of these days all the skies will be brighter,
Some of these days all the burdens be lighter,
Hearts will be happier, souls will be whiter,
Some of these days.

Some of these days, in the deserts uprising,
Fountains shall flash while the joybells are ringing,
And the world, with its sweetest of birds, shall go singing,
Some of these days.

Some of these days: Let us bear with our sorrow,
Faith in the future,—its light we may borrow,
There will be joy in the golden to-morrow,—
Some of these days.

That is my faith; I am no pessimist on this Negro problem. Terrible as the facts are, cruel and bitter as is this race prejudice, and insurmountable, almost, as are the obstacles which it sets up in our pathway, I see a light ahead, I am hopeful, I look forward to better times. And I want to tell you this morning what the ground of this hope is.

Before doing so, however, I may be permitted to say in passing, I do not think there is much ground for hope through national interposition. Whether the general government has power or not, the simple fact is, it lacks the disposition. I refer to no particular administration, but to the general government as such. It doesn't seem to make any difference who is at the head of affairs, the same indisposition is found, the same timidity is manifested, the same let-alone policy is pursued. I do not at this point raise the question as to whether that is a right or wrong policy. I am simply noting the fact, and saying, that through that source, there is little or no ground of hope, so far as I can see. And yet, I have sometimes felt that if we could have had in the presidential chair a succession of men like Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania,—that stern old commoner, that man of iron will, and of deep heartfelt sympathy for the oppressed, the spirit of lawlessness in the South would long since have been stamped out. He would have found a way, just as President Cleve-

land found a way to suppress the labor riots in Chicago. Where there is a will, there is a way. The old pro-slavery power never found any difficulty in finding in the constitution and laws of the land a warrant for whatever it wanted to do: why should we find any difficulty in finding a warrant in the constitution and laws of the land for suppressing mob violence and revolution, for rooting out the band of murderers and traitors that infest the Southern section of our country? If the enemies of freedom found a way to do what they wanted, why should we find any difficulty in protecting innocent and loyal black citizens of the Republic, who have been true to the nation in every crisis of its history, and who to-day are as true and as patriotic as any other class of citizens? Why, I ask, should there be any difficulty?

Nor do I see any hope through the action of either of the great political parties. We have nothing to hope from the Democratic party, neither have we anything to hope for from the Republican Party. Neither party is going to concern itself about the rights of the Negro, except so far as it can use him. Neither party feels any interest in him: both would be glad to get rid of him. In the South, the Democratic party would eliminate him entirely, and in the North, it is only where he holds the balance of power, that any attention is ever paid to him. I am not speaking for or against either party; I am simply stating a

fact, which you know, and which I know, and which every man, white or black, knows to be true. The Democratic party has always stood in the way of the Negro's advancement: that is its record. And the Republican party,—the time was when it stood squarely on the platform of human rights, when its great strong arm was stretched out in protection of the Negro, when it felt as Lowell has so nobly expressed it,—

“ We owe allegiance to the State; but
 deeper, truer, more,
 To the sympathies that God hath set
 within our spirit's core;
 Our country claims our fealty; we grant
 it so, but then
 Before Man made us citizens, great
 Nature made us men.

“ He's true to God who's true to man;
 wherever wrong is done,
 To the humblest and the weakest, 'neath
 the all-beholding sun,
 That wrong is also done to us; and they
 are slaves most base,
 Whose love of right is for themselves,
 and not for all their race.

That is where the Republican party once stood, when it was dominated by the influence of such men as Sumner and Wilson, Chase and Giddings, Morton and Stevens, and a host of other champions of freedom; but it is not so now. It is so absorbed with matters of the tariff and the cur-

rency, that it doesn't seem to hear any longer the cries of the oppressed millions of Negroes, for protection against lawlessness and brutality. I do not say this, with a view of inducing a single representative of our race to abandon the grand old party: we owe it much, all that we have,—freedom, citizenship, the ballot, came to us through it. We never can forget it: we never will forget it. No. And it is because of the love I bear it, and of what it has been, that it grieves me to find it so lukewarm and indifferent now to the interests which once stirred it so profoundly.

Nor is there, so far as I can see, much ground of hope from an appeal to force. The odds are against us. Even in the South, the whites outnumber us, are superior to us in intelligence, and in resources. It is also morally certain, that if there should be an uprising of the blacks, there would not only be a united South, but also a united North, to crush it out; and the general government, which has never been able to find a warrant in the Constitution and laws, and a sufficient pretext for interfering to put down the uprising of the whites against the blacks, would very soon be en route for the scene of action. The whole army and navy, if it were necessary, would be employed to crush out a Negro uprising.

And yet, while this may be true, I am also reminded of the fact, that in the dreadful condition of things which existed in France for centuries,

where the lower and middle classes were oppressed, ground down under the heel of the nobility, it was not until that awful tragedy, called the French Revolution, burst upon the world, that a change for the better began. You remember what Lowell says in his immortal "Ode to France:"

"They trampled Peace beneath their savage feet,
And by her golden tresses drew
Mercy along the pavement of the street.
O Freedom: Freedom: is thy morning dew
So gory red? Alas, thy light had ne'er
Shone in upon the chaos of their lair.
They reared to thee such symbols as they knew,
And worshipped it with flame and blood,
A vengeance, axe in hand, that stood
Holding a tyrant's head up by the clotted hair."

That great movement, the greatest, perhaps, aside from the birth of Christ, in the annals of the world, began in blood.

I am also reminded of the fact, that during the great anti-slavery agitation in this country, it was not until John Brown, that apostle of force, struck his blow at Harper's Ferry, that the nation was aroused to a true sense of the nature of the cancer that was gnawing at its vitals. It was the blow at Harper's Ferry that stirred the nation from its sleep as nothing else had done. Brown was hung, it is true, but the glorious cause for which he struck went marching on. Von Holst, in the seventh volume of his History of the United States, in

speaking of the Harper's Ferry episode, says, "By means of that scaffold,—the first erected in the United States for a traitor, and, indeed, for a political criminal,—the words, "He that is not for me is against me, and he that is not against me, is for me," grew to the fulness of truth. Precisely because it was conceded, almost without contradiction, that the local existence of slavery had made Brown's execution a necessity, people could not help having universally a certain feeling of responsibility for it, since not the South alone, but the entire people, bore before God and man the responsibility for the legal existence of slavery. Hence, if not loudly, at least irrepressibly, the voice of conscience, in numberless breasts, demanded an answer to the question, whether that scaffold was a tree of malediction and ignominy for the man who had to breathe his life out upon it, or rather for the people who were compelled by their institutions to erect it. Brown's conduct, from the moment of his arrest until his latest breath, irresistibly forced new multitudes, every day, to ask themselves this question, with the honesty and earnestness which its dreadful importance demanded; and the number of those from whom it wrested the right answer, and who had the courage publicly to confess it, swelled to even greater proportions."

Continuing, he says,—“The attack he and his twenty men made on slavery, with powder and

lead, was a sublime piece of folly." Considered in its physical aspects, it was a sublime piece of folly; but was it in vain? That it was not, is evident from Van Holst's own words, for he goes on to say, "The fear with which his lawless violence had inspired the South was groundless, but the slavocracy had no arms, offensive, or defensive, against John Brown, overpowered, mortally wounded, and hanged. Even in his boldest dreams he had never ventured to hope that he would be able to deal slavery a blow of such destructive force as he had now dealt it, by his suffering and his death." And so, before this question is settled, it may be necessary to startle the nation again by some terrible tragedy from its sleep of indifference to the increasing disregard to the rights of the Negro, by the same power that held him down before, and against which John Brown leveled his blow. Do not misunderstand me. I am not counseling violence: I am not saying that it is a wise thing for the Negro to resort to violence; but I am saying that sometimes violence is the means which God uses to arouse the sleeping conscience, and pierce the rhinoceros hide of indifference. I trust that it may not be necessary, but if it must come, then, I for one say, let it come, and the sooner it comes the better. The Negro will not be responsible for it. What Lowell says of the oppressed millions of France will be equally true of him,

"They did as they were taught; not theirs the blame,
If men who scattered firebrands reaped the flame."

There is in this same wonderful poem a lesson which it would be well for these white Southern bullies and Negro haters, whose highest ambition is to put their heels on the neck of the Negro, to note and carefully consider. It is contained in the first stanza:—

“As, flake by flake, the beetling avalanches
 Build up their imminent crags of noiseless snow,
 Till some chance thrill the loosened ruin launches,
 And the blind havoc leaps unwarned below,—
 So grew and gathered through the silent years
 The madness of a people, wrong by wrong.

There seemed no strength in the dumb toilers' tears,
 No strength in suffering, but the past was strong:
 The brute despair of trampled centuries
 Leaped up with one hoarse yell and snapped its bands,
 Groped for its rights with horny, callous hands,
 And stared around for God with bloodshot eyes.

What wonder if those palms were all too hard
 For nice distinctions, if that maddened throng,—
 They whose thick atmosphere no bard
 Had shivered with the lightning of his song,
 Brutes, with the memories and desires of men,
 Whose chronicles were writ with iron pen,
 In the crooked shoulder and the forehead low,—
 Set wrong to balance wrong,
 And physicked woe with woe?”

Things cannot go on in the way in which they are going on in the South, without producing in the Negro a feeling of bitterness, of hatred, under a sense of wrong, which is bound, sooner or later, to have its harvest of blood. That is the teaching

of experience; that is the way these things work themselves out. This was the thought, evidently, in the mind of Longfellow when he wrote "The Warning."

"Beware. The Israelite of old, who tore
 The lion in his path, when, poor and blind,
 He saw the blessed light of heaven no more,
 Shorn of his noble strength and forced to grind
 In prison, and at last led forth to be
 A pander to Philistine revelry,—

Upon the pillars of the temple laid
 His desperate hand, and in its overthrow
 Destroyed himself, and with him those who made
 A cruel mockery of his sightless woe;
 The poor, blind Slave, the scoff and jest of all,
 Expired, and thousands perished in the fall.

There is a poor, blind Samson in this land,
 Shorn of his strength, and bound in bonds of steel,
 Who may, in some grim revel, raise his hand,
 And shake the pillars of this Commonweal,
 Till the vast temple of our liberties
 A shapeless mass of wreck and rubbish lies."

This Negro question must be settled, and it must be settled right: and until it is settled right, there will be no peace. That is God's law. It is vain to cry, peace, peace, as long as iniquity abounds. The white people in the South, and the white people in the North, as well, who sympathize with the Southern estimate of the Negro, had just as well understand, once for all, that the Negro is a man and an American citizen, and that he will never be

satisfied until he is treated as a man, and as a full-fledged citizen. Until his manhood is recognized, and all his rights, civil and political, are accorded to him, he will never hold his peace, will never cease to cry aloud, to agitate, to make trouble. He would be a fool if he didn't. This is what the Southern whites, and the Northern sympathizers, might just as well understand, I say. And it would be well also for the representative of our race, who thinks that the best policy for us to pursue is self-effacement, to understand it. Self-effacement! Show me a Negro who believes in self-effacement, and I will show you a Negro, who will himself sooner or later become effaced.

There is not the slightest danger of this race, which can boast of a Douglass,—that noble type of heroic manhood,—ever consenting to self-effacement. Why the very thought of it, is enough to bring back from the grave that old, battle-scarred hero. I almost seem to see him now, in view of this pernicious doctrine which has been projecting itself upon our attention for the past week or ten days, coming up from his resting place in yonder cemetery with disheveled locks, and outstretched arms, and troubled countenance, and saying by the expression upon his face:—What does all this mean? Are you losing your senses, my people? Yes, There he stands,—great Douglass,—sad of countenance, and with an affrighted, terrified look in his eyes. Be not disturbed, O friend of many

years, O great champion, who didst carry this race in thy bosom as a father his nursing child, during all thine earthly pilgrimage:—go back to thy resting place. Have no fear. We, who have looked into thy face; we, who have heard thy voice; we, who have caught thy spirit; we, who know something of the mighty manhood which burned in thy breast, will never consent to, or in any way countenance, the pernicious doctrine of race-effacement. We pledge ourselves to-day, as we think of thee, and of thy great compeers,—Garrison, Phillips, Sumner, Whittier, Lundy, Lovejoy, Purvis,—and of our brothers in the South, lying in their untimely graves, sent there by the bullets of lawless and bloody ruffians; and of their loved ones, left to mourn their loss in their lonely wanderings in solitary places, afraid to return to their homes,—as we think of thee, and of all these, we pledge ourselves never to be satisfied with anything less than the treatment that belongs to a man, and to a full-fledged American citizen. We pledge ourselves, not only to maintain that attitude ourselves, but to teach our children, and our children's children to do the same. Fathers and mothers, you who are here, you, who have little children coming up, you who will soon pass from the stage of action, remember what I am saying; see to it that your children catch the spirit of which I am speaking, and which was so magnificently exemplified in the character of our great

leader and champion. Teach your sons and daughters, begin when they are little, as soon as they are able to understand, that though they may have a dark skin, they are just as much the children of God, are just as dear to him, and are entitled to the same rights and privileges, under the Constitution, as the whitest child. Teach them that they have rights, and equal rights, with the whitest, and to stand up for their rights. Teach them to respect themselves, and not to despise themselves because they happen to have a dark skin. Don't let them get into their heads the notion that because they are colored, therefore, they must efface themselves, must be satisfied with less than is accorded to white children. Let them take in these ideas with the first breath they breathe, with the milk that they suck from the breast of motherhood, and let them strengthen with their age. The place in which to kill this pernicious doctrine of self-effacement, and to beget a spirit of manliness that will take care of itself, in the battle which we are waging with the enemies of our rights, is the home. If you, fathers and mothers, will do your duty, in a short while there will not be found in this broad land a single Negro advocating this doctrine of self-effacement. Everywhere there will be found a sturdy manhood, that will command respect, and that no cowardly ruffians will be found trampling upon with impunity.

As I think of our great, departed leader, Douglass, and remember that there is a school building in this city named after him, and that his portrait hangs upon its wall, and that there has been inaugurated here what is called a Douglass Day, in the schools, I feel that I have a message also for the teachers,—you who meet these children six days out of the week; you who are not only training their intellects, but also helping to mould their characters,—I lay upon you the same solemn charge as was laid upon the fathers and mothers. See to it that you enforce the teachings of the home in this respect; that you do your part in giving to your pupils just conceptions of what their rights are, and the spirit in which they should stand up for them. Catch the spirit yourselves, and see to it that you put it into them. Whatever else you fail in doing, whatever else you may slight, or slur over, see to it that you put conscience into this,—for the destiny of a race is involved in it. The real issue is, whether the Negro shall be accorded the rights and privileges of a man and a citizen in this country; and the way to meet this issue, is to develop manhood in the Negro. A race that permits itself to be trampled upon will be trampled upon. A race that goes around with hat in hand, in a cringing attitude, in the presence of the dominant race, as if it were afraid to claim anything, lest it might give offense, or entail suffering upon itself, is sure to be an object of con-

tempt. Let us here, to-day, one and all of us, before God,—in this sacred place, pledge ourselves to eternal hostility to any teaching that would put the Negro in such an attitude. Be assured that nothing is to be gained by compromising with evil. The divine injunction is, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you; and if as a race, we do not resist these encroachments upon our rights, we will be trampled upon more and more. Why, the very thought of race-effacement stirs me to the very centre of my being. The more I think of it, the madder I get, the more is my indignation aroused, the more am I impressed with the importance of stamping it with the indelible stigma of abhorrence. What was the whole history of slavery in this country, but an attempt on the part of the Southern whites to efface from the Negro every element that went to make a man, and to degrade him to a mere beast of burden? And now, after more than thirty years of freedom, shall the Negro be asked to take up this work, which was begun by the slave oligarchy, and carry it on by effacing himself? Why, it is abhorrent. “Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?” Such a suggestion coming from white men would be bad enough, but when it comes from black men,—well, I will not characterize it.

Be assured, the more we yield, the more we will be called upon to yield. If we practice self-effacement in one respect, in obedience to the demands

of our enemies, we will be called upon to do it in others. The folly of such a course is to be seen in the very spirit out of which the demand comes. It is the spirit which denies the equality of the Negro; which assumes that he belongs to an inferior race,—an inferiority due not to circumstances, but inherent, inborn, God-ordained; and therefore, because he is a Negro, he has no right to expect, or to receive the same treatment as a white man. Such a spirit is not to be overcome by concession, by self-renunciation, but by self-assertion, by manly resistance. That was the gospel that was preached by the sage of Anacostia, by Garnet, by Ward, by the champions of freedom in every age of the world. What if the American people had adopted the principle of self-effacement, in the presence of the unjust demands of the British Crown? Where would we be to-day? The immortal Declaration of Independence never would have been written, and the Revolutionary War, out of which came this great Republic, never would have been fought. What, if the English people themselves had quietly submitted to the tyranny of King John, where would have been the Magna Charta? When Mr. Garrison began the Anti-slavery agitation in this country, how did he meet the slave power? As Lundy had done, by preaching the gospel of gradual emancipation? No: but by the demand for immediate, unconditional emancipation. And it was that doctrine that won. In what spirit did he

meet the whole nation, North as well as South, when the press and the pulpit, and the army and navy, stood behind the institution of slavery? In an apologetic, and compromising tone? No. He said, "I am in earnest; I will not excuse; I will not equivocate; I will not retreat a single inch; and I will be heard." And he was heard. That is the spirit that always conquers. You can't kill that spirit, the individuals breathing it may die, but its influence will remain. As Byron has expressed it,

"The block may soak their gore; their heads
Be strung to city gates or castle walls,
But still their spirit walks abroad."

In the struggle with oppression in this country, through which we are now passing, the same spirit, that came upon Garrison must come upon us. We must be in earnest; we must not equivocate; we must not excuse; we must not retreat a single inch in the demand which we make for complete recognition of all of our rights: and we must be heard. That is the gospel that I believe in; that is the gospel that I have been preaching, and shall go on preaching as long as God gives me breath. Standing in this sacred desk and place, and in your presence, I raise my right hand to heaven, and say, Let it be paralyzed, if I am ever found preaching any other gospel.

But I have not yet told you what my reasons are for being hopeful of the future: and as it is now too

late to do so, I shall be obliged to ask your indulgence for yet another Sabbath. I am glad to see so many here. It shows that we are interested in race issues. God grant that this interest may go on broadening and deepening.



Sermon III.

Signs of a brighter future.

“Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart.”—Psalm 27:14.

FOR the past two Sabbaths, I have been speaking of some of the discouraging circumstances in the struggle which we are making, for our rights in this country,—the growing unfriendliness of the North, the hostility of the press, the silence and cowardice of the Pulpit, the growing spirit of lawlessness in the South, the apathy and indifference of the general government and of both political parties. In spite of all these discouragements, however, I believe as I said on last Sabbath, that there is a brighter future for us in this country. And I ground this belief (1), upon the fact that the Negro is thinking about his rights to-day, with a seriousness and earnestness such as he has never displayed before. Not only the more intelligent and thoughtful Negro, but all classes, from the highest to the lowest, from the most intelligent to the most illiterate. The recent outrage that was perpetrated at Wilmington by a

band of law breakers and murderers has stirred our people as nothing else has ever done. I have seen them aroused before, but never as at present. Everywhere the feeling is the same. For the moment, this bold, brazen, murderous assault upon our rights, and the consequences to which it must inevitably lead, if the spirit out of which it has come is allowed to go unchecked, has crowded out every other thought. This is the way it has affected me, and this is the way it has affected all with whom I have come in contact. A something is touching the heart of the Negro as I have never seen it touched before. What is it? What does it all mean? ~~It is~~ the instinct of self preservation. It means that the Negro is waking up to a realization of the true meaning of these outrages, that in them he sees a studied, persistent, carefully thought out plan to despoil him of his rights. It means also, the growing purpose and determination on his part to resist these aggressions. And this to my mind is one of the most hopeful signs of a brighter day. If the Negro could himself submit to these outrages, these assaults upon his rights, without a protest; if there was any disposition on his part to quietly acquiesce in them; did they not fill him with righteous indignation; were he not moved to growl and grumble and resist, then would there be indeed, ground for despondency. But the fact that he does not quietly submit, that he feels outraged by them, is to my mind one

of the saving qualities in his character, and one of the most hopeful signs of his ability to take care of himself and to carve out for himself a great and honorable future. Thank God for these myriad voices that I hear everywhere protesting; for this discontent with present conditions which I see everywhere manifesting itself. The very thing which so many of our enemies are finding fault with, are using against us,—namely, that the Negro is becoming more and more insolent, more and more obtrusive, more and more self-assertive,—is the very thing which gives me hope. It shows that he is becoming more and more conscious of what belongs to him, and more and more determined to stand up for his rights. That, of course, is a very bad sign to those who think that the Negro has no rights which white men are bound to respect. Every demand which he makes, every attempt to stand in his place as a man is regarded as an impertinence, as a piece of insolence. If he does not lift his hat in the presence of a white face, and take the outside of the sidewalk, as the old time antebellum Negro used to do, he is adjudged, No good, and is looked upon as a Negro who has been spoiled by freedom. No, my white friends, it is not that he has been spoiled by freedom, but that under freedom he has been developing; it means, that under freedom he is becoming more of a man, more and more conscious of his rights; it means that the scales are falling from his eyes, and the

glorious light of freedom is streaming in upon his vision. It is Lowell who says :

“When a deed is done for Freedom, through the broad earth’s
aching breast
Runs a thrill of joy prophetic, trembling on from east to west,
And the slave, where’er he cowers, feels the soul within him
climb
To the awful verge of manhood.”

And that is what these exhibitions of so-called insolence mean : they mean that the Negro, who was once a slave in this land, under the bracing air of freedom, is beginning to “climb to the awful verge of manhood.” This consciousness which is beginning to awake in him, and which is beginning to show signs of increasing vitality,—the consciousness that he is a man, and that he is entitled to be treated as a man,—is not going to be crushed out under the iron heel of oppression, or awed into silence by armed mobs of bloody ruffians in the South, or by the acquiescence and sympathetic support of Northern Negro haters. No : it will go on gathering strength. The Negro is bound to get his rights, or else there will be trouble: there will be trouble anyhow, but it won’t last. It will cease just as soon as the whites come to see that the Negro himself is in earnest, that he means to claim his rights, and to have them. There is nothing which this Anglo-Saxon race honors more than manhood. It will resent it at first in other races, especially in so-called inferior races, but when it

has once been demonstrated, it will respect it. And the fact that the Negro is developing manhood is a hopeful sign that his rights will one day be fully recognized.

In this connection, one of the things which has encouraged me greatly of late has been the action of the colored miners who were imported from Alabama to work in the mines of Illinois, because of a strike on the part of the white laborers. These black men needed work: they had the offer of work; they accepted the offer, as they had a right to do, and proceeded to the place designated by their employers, but were met by armed men who declared that they should not carry out their contract. What did these Negro laborers do? Run-away? No, they prepared to defend themselves, and did defend themselves, as every man has a right to do. It took a good deal of courage for these men, under the circumstances, even to go to Illinois, but they went all the same. Of course, under the self-effacement theory, they did wrong, they had no right to go. They knew that they were not wanted, that if they went trouble would ensue, and, therefore, they ought to have stayed away. Peace is the thing, according to this doctrine, that we must always keep in view, and for which we must be willing to make any and every sacrifice: and that means, not peace in our own souls, but peace in the soul of the white man,—the peace that the lion feels when the lamb is on the inside of him,—peace

in the sense of making the white man peaceably inclined towards us. In other words, the giving up on our part of everything in us which the white man doesn't like, which may be displeasing to him. If ever there was a doctrine that was conceived by the evil one, it is certainly this doctrine of race effacement, in deference to the Negro-hating spirit of the South.

The black miners, who went from Alabama into Illinois, took no stock in this doctrine. The fact that white laborers did not want them to work did not influence them in the least: they went straight forward, and when their rights were assailed, they defended themselves. These men are still in Illinois, and they are likely to remain there, and to pursue their work unmolested. It is in the growth of this spirit, the spirit of manly resistance to unjust assaults upon our rights, which I see everywhere manifesting itself, that the dawning of a better day for us in this land is to be found.

(2.) I am hopeful, because of the progress which the Negro is making in intelligence and in wealth. Think of what our condition was at the close of the war, and of what it is to-day, in these respects. That we are progressing, there can be no doubt: indeed, in view of all the circumstances, our progress has been marvelous.

Take the matter of wealth. Since freedom, hundreds and thousands of our people have become property owners in the South. Many of them are

prosperous and successful farmers ; thousands and hundreds of thousands of acres of land have come into their possession, hundreds and thousands of them in the cities own their own homes, and are engaged in small but lucrative business enterprises of one kind or another. They are now paying taxes on some three hundred million dollars' worth of property. That is not a very large sum, I admit, considered as the aggregate wealth of a whole race, numbering some seven or eight millions; but whether much or little, it indicates progress, and very considerable progress, and that is the point to which I am directing attention. The acquisitive faculty in the Negro is being developed ; his eyes are being opened more and more to the importance of getting wealth : and slowly, but surely, he is getting it.

Educationally, the same is true. Thirty years ago there were but few educational institutions among us, but few professional men,—doctors, lawyers, ministers,—ministers of intelligence,—teachers; but few men and women of education. Now, there are thousands of well-equipped men and women in all the professions, and thousands upon thousands of men and women of education in every part of the country. Not only are there institutions founded especially for our benefit, crowded with students, but all the great institutions of the land are now open to us, and in all of them, with scarcely an exception, are to be found rep-

representatives of our race: and the number in such institutions is steadily increasing. The last report of the Commissioner of Education shows that in the common schools of the sixteen former slave States and the District of Columbia, there are enrolled 1,429,713 pupils, and that in these schools, some twenty-five thousand teachers are employed. It also shows that there are 178 schools for secondary and higher education, with an enrollment of over forty thousand pupils. There are, of course, thousands of our people who are still very ignorant, but that there is vastly more intelligence in the race now, than at the close of the war, no one will pretend to deny. The colleges and universities, the high and normal schools, are turning out hundreds of graduates every year. The educational outlook for the race is certainly very encouraging.

In view of these two factors,—the growing desire on the part of the Negro for material possessions, the fact that he is actually acquiring property, and his growing intelligence,—I see signs of a brighter future for him. These are elements of power that will make themselves felt. You may deprive a poor and ignorant people of their rights, and succeed in keeping them deprived of them, but you can't hope to do that when these conditions are changed: and the point to which I am directing attention here, is that this change is taking place. All that has been done, and is being done to stimulate in the Negro this principle of acquisitive-

ness, and to increase his thirst for knowledge, is a harbinger of a better day. Every dollar saved, or properly invested; every atom of brain power that is developed, is a John the Baptist in the wilderness, crying, Make straight the pathway of the Negro. In proportion as the race rises in intelligence and wealth, the valleys will be filled and the mountains will be leveled, that now stand in the way of his progress, in the way of the complete recognition of all of his rights. Ignatius Donnelly, in that remarkable book of his, "Doctor Huguet," which some of you, doubtless, have read, would seem to teach the opposite of this. He attempts to show that never mind what the intellectual attainments of the Negro may be,—he may be a Doctor Huguet, learned with all the learning of the schools, and cultured with all the culture of the ages,—still there is no chance for him, there is no hope of his being recognized. The story as told by him is, at first, quite staggering and terribly depressing. But when we remember that, according to the story, there was but one Dr. Huguet with a black skin, and that he was poor, and that all the rest of his race were poor and ignorant, light breaks in upon the darkness, the awful pall which it casts upon us, is at once lifted. How will it be when instead of one Dr. Huguet, there are hundreds and thousands of them, scholarly men and women, cultivated men and women, men and women of wealth, of large resources? It will be very different. If

the Negro was indifferent to education; if he was actually getting poorer, then we might lose heart; but, thank God, the very opposite is true. His face is in the right direction. He may not be pressing on as rapidly as he might towards the goal, as rapidly as some of us might wish to see him, but it is a matter for congratulation, that he is not retrograding, nor even standing still, but is moving on. Poor? Yes, but he isn't always going to be poor. Ignorant? Yes, but he isn't always going to be ignorant. The progress that he has already made in these directions shows clearly what the future is to be. Knowledge is power; wealth is power, and that power the Negro is getting. He is not always going to be a mere hewer of wood and a drawer of water; he is not always going to be crude, ignorant. American prejudice is strong, I know; it is full of infernal hate, I know, but in the long run it will be found to be no match for the power which comes from wealth and intelligence.

(3.) I am hopeful because I have faith in the ultimate triumph of right. You remember what Lowell says in his "Elegy on the Death of Dr. Channing:"

"Truth needs no champions: in the infinite deep
Of everlasting soul her strength abides,
From Nature's heart her mighty pulses leap,
Through Nature's veins her strength, undying tides.

I watch the circle of the eternal years,
And read forever in the storied page

One lengthened roll of blood, and wrong, and tears,—
 One onward step of Truth from age to age,

The poor are crushed, the tyrants link their chain;
 The poet sings through narrow dungeon-grates;
 Man's hope lies quenched;—and, lo, with steadfast gain
 Freedom doth forge her mail of adverse fates.

Men slay the prophets; fagot, rack, and cross
 Make up the groaning records of the past;
 But Evil's triumphs are her endless loss,
 And sovereign Beauty wins the soul at last."

"From off the starry mountain-peak of song,
 The spirit shows me, in the coming time,
 An earth unwithered by the foot of wrong,
 A race revering its own soul sublime."

And in the "Ode to France," from which I quoted
 on last Sabbath, the same glorious thought is ex-
 pressed:—

"And surely never did thine altars glance
 With purer fires than now in France;
 While, in their bright white flashes,
 Wrong's shadow, backward cast,
 Waves covering o'er the ashes
 Of the dead, blaspheming past,
 O'er the shapes of fallen giants,
 His own unburied brood,
 Whose dead hands clench defiance
 At the overpowering good:
 And down the happy future runs a flood
 Of prophesying light;
 It shows an Earth no longer stained with blood,
 Blossom and fruit where now we see the bud
 Of Brotherhood and Right."

That is my faith. The wrong may triumph for the moment, but in its very triumph is its death-knell; it cannot always prevail. God has so constituted the moral universe, has so planted in the human heart the sense of right, that ultimately justice is sure to be done. "Ever the Right comes uppermost," is no mere poetic fancy, but one of God's great laws. In the light of that law, I am hopeful. I know that things cannot go on as they are going on now, that the outrageous manner in which we are at present treated cannot always continue. It is bound to end sooner or later.

(4.) I am hopeful, because I have faith in the power of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ to conquer all prejudices, to break down all walls of separation, and to weld together men of all races in one great brotherhood. It is a religion that teaches the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, a religion in which there is neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free. And this religion is in this land. There are, according to the statistics of the churches for 1898, excluding Christian Scientists, Jews and Latter Day Saints, 135,667 ministers in the United States, 187,075 churches, and 26,100,884 communicants in these churches. This would seem to be a guarantee that every right belonging to the Negro would be secured to him: that in the struggle which he is making in this country for simple justice and fair play, for manhood recognition, for such treat-

ment as his humanity and citizenship entitle him, back of him would be found these 135,667 ministers, 187,075 churches and 26,100,884 church members. But, alas, such is not the case. These professed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ who came to seek and to save the lost, who was the friend of publicans and sinners, whose gospel was a gospel of love, and who was all the time reaching down and seeking to befriend the lowly, those who were despised and who were being trampled upon by others;—the Christ of whom it is written, “And he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and who in speaking of himself said, “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to comfort all that mourn; to give them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness:”—these professed followers of this wonderfully glorious Christ, instead of standing back of the poor Negro in the earnest, desperate struggle which he is making against this damnable race-prejudice, which curses him because he is down, branding him with vile epithets, calling him low, degraded, ignorant, besotted: and yet putting its heel upon his neck so as to prevent him from ris-

ing: despising him because he is down, and hating him when he manifests any disposition to throw off his ignorance and degradation and show himself a man;—in this struggle, I say, against this damnable race-prejudice, these professing Christians are often his worst enemies, his most malignant haters and traducers. In the bloody riot at Wilmington, when law and order and decency were trampled under foot, there were not only church members among the lawless ruffians who subverted the government and destroyed life and property, but even ministers of the gospel, we are told, were out with muskets on their shoulders, ready to shoot down black American citizens, for no crime, unless it be a crime for a Negro to exercise his constitutional right.

If I could bring myself to believe by any process of reasoning, that these people were really Christians, it would drive me into infidelity: I would utterly repudiate such a religion. But I know that they are not Christians: I know that the religion—I was about to say, which they profess, but rather which they possess,—is not Christianity. It is a miserable lie to say that it is. And you know that it is a lie: and I know that it is a lie: and these very people who profess to be Christians know that they are lying; and God, before whose judgment seat they shall one day stand to answer for their cowardly and brutal treatment of a weak and struggling race, or their quiet acquiescence in it, knows that they are lying.

In saying that the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ is in this land, I do not therefore, base my assertion upon the fact, that there are 135,667 ministers in it, and 187,075 churches, and 26,100,884 professing Christians. No. The American Church as such is only an apology for a church. It is an apostate church, utterly unworthy of the name which it bears. Its spirit is a mean, and cowardly, and despicable spirit. "One shall chase a thousand, we are told in the good Book—and two shall put ten thousand to flight. "And yet with 135,667 preachers, and more than 26,000,000 church members in this land, this awful, black record of murder and lawlessness against a weak and defenseless race, still goes on. In the presence of this appalling fact, I can well understand the spirit which moved Theodore Parker,—that pulpit Jupiter of his day,—when in his great sermon on "The True Idea of a Christian Church," he said, "In the midst of all these wrongs and sins,—the crimes of men, society and the State,—amid popular ignorance, pauperism, crime and war, and slavery too,—is the church to say nothing, do nothing: nothing for the good of such as feel the wrong, nothing to save them who do the wrong? Men tell us so, in word and deed; that way alone is safe! If I thought so, I would never enter the church but once again, and then to bow my shoulders to their manliest work, to heave down its strong pillars, arch and dome, and roof, and wall,

steeple and tower, though like Samson I buried myself under the ruins of that temple which profaned the worship of the God most high, of God most loved. I would do this in the name of man; in the name of Christ I would do it; yes, in the dear and blessed name of God." And I would do it, too.

In spite of the shallowness and emptiness and glaring hypocrisy of this thing which calls itself the church, this thing which is so timid, so cowardly that it dares not touch any sin that is unpopular, I still believe that Christianity is in this land. To-day it is like a little grain of mustard seed, but it has entered the soil, has germinated, and is springing up. It is like the little lump of leaven which the woman hid in three measures of meal: but it has begun to work, and will go on working, diffusing itself, until the whole is leavened. God has promised to give to his Son the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession: and in that promise this land is included. Christianity shall one day have sway even in Negro-hating America; the spirit which it inculcates, and which it is capable of producing, is sure, sooner or later, to prevail. I have, myself, here and there, seen its mighty transforming power. I have seen white men and women under its regenerating influence lose entirely the caste feeling, to whom the brother in black was as truly a brother as the brother in

white. If Christianity were a mere world influence, I should have no such hope; but it is something more than a mere world influence; it is from above; back of it is the mighty power of God. The record is, "To as many as received him to them gave he power to become children of God, even to them that believed on his name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It can do what no mere human power can do. Jesus Christ is yet to reign in this land. I will not see it, you will not see it, but it is coming all the same. In the growth of Christianity, true, real, genuine Christianity in this land, I see the promise of better things for us as a race.

(5.) I have faith in a brighter future for us in this country, because both in the North and in the South, there are some white men, and some white women, too, who do not approve of the present treatment which is accorded to us, or share in the sentiment which regards us as naturally inferior to the whites, as designed by Nature for a lower plane. There are some white people in this country, who believe that the Negro is a man, and that he is entitled to be treated as a man; that he is a citizen, and that he ought to have all the rights that belong to a citizen, both civil and political. There are not a great many, I admit, but there are some. A part of these are timid; they see the wrong; they feel the wrong; they deeply deplore

the conduct of their own race, but they are afraid to speak out, to give public expression to their sentiments. They are like Nicodemus of old, who could say to Jesus, "Thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do the miracles that thou dost except God be with him," and yet who came to him by night, for fear of offending public sentiment. There are in the Southland to-day men who feel towards the brother in black, just as Nicodemus felt towards Christ,—who feel kindly towards him, who have faith in him, who believe that he is entitled to better treatment, but who are kept from speaking for fear of social ostracism and personal violence. Bishop Dudley of Kentucky, some years ago, wrote an article entitled, "The Silent South," if I remember correctly, the design of which was to show that in the South itself, there were those who did not approve of the brutal treatment that was accorded to the Negro. And this sentiment, though at present suppressed, is not always going to be silent. It is bound to grow, to get stronger and stronger as the years go by. I have hope of these Nicodemuses in the South; the time is coming, I believe, when they will stand out boldly for the right. I am encouraged in this by the reflection that the man who timidly came to Jesus by night afterwards openly spoke up for him before the Sanhedrin, and after his crucifixion brought large quantities of myrrh and aloes for embalming his body. The time came when he was not ashamed

or afraid to have it known that he believed in Jesus as the Christ. These timid ones in the South will not always be timid.

But in addition to these silent sympathizers with us in our struggle against caste prejudice, there are those who are not silent, who speak out their sentiments; who have been crying out and are still crying out against these wrongs; who have been working and are still working to help us in the struggle. Among these may be mentioned Dr. W. Hayes Ward of The Independent, a big-brained and big-hearted man, whose noble editorials for years have been a source of strength and inspiration to us. I know of no man who appreciates more fully the nature of the fight that we are making, or who more deeply sympathizes with us than he does. A few years ago he delivered a sermon before the American Missionary Association, which was one of the most manly, courageous, and magnificent utterances ever made on the Negro problem in this country. It dealt especially with the persistent effort on the part of the Southern whites to humiliate us, to keep us down, and declared in the strongest terms possible, undying hostility to all such efforts. It was worthy of the anointed lips of Garrison himself in his best days. It had all the fire, and fervor, and majesty, and tone of command of one of the old prophets sent by God to speak to the sleeping conscience of the nation. You, who have been read-

ing The Independent, within the past few weeks, know how fearlessly it has spoken out against the outrages in North and South Carolina. And as long as W. Hayes Ward is at the helm it will continue to speak out in behalf of the down-trodden, the oppressed. God has put this man in this citadel of power, at the head of the greatest religious weekly in the land, and his guns have always been leveled at the enemies of human right, at oppression and mob violence; he has always wielded his vast powers in the interest of law, and order, and good government; in the interest of the poor, struggling, much-abused, and ill-treated Negro. That paper is making public sentiment, is helping to prepare the way for better things. The seed which it is sowing will be gathered after many days.

Mention should also be made of Albion W. Tourgee, who has made great sacrifices for us, and whose voice and pen have been used unsparingly in our behalf. Also of George W. Cable, who has found time in the midst of his busy literary labors, to utter a word of protest against the barbarism of the South, and in the interest of the oppressed,—a man who rather than stifle his convictions, rather than hold his peace, left the land of his birth and came where he would be free to express the sentiments of his heart.

Mention should also be made of such men as the Tolberts of South Carolina. You have read

their history, you know what kind of men they are. Braver, truer men are not to be found anywhere. In an article published in the issue of *The Independent*, November 25th, by R. R. Tolbert, who is Chairman of the Republican State Committee, and at the recent election, was the Republican candidate for Congress, in the district which includes Greenwood County and the town of Phoenix, the following statement will be found. "Twenty-five years ago the State of South Carolina achieved an unenviable prominence for its race riots; the white man being as usual the aggressor, and the black man the aggrieved. The only whites who then shared the sufferings of the Negroes belonged to the carpet-bag class,—men who had come into the State as temporary sojourners, worked their way into politics and organized, or tried to organize, the Negro vote against the Bourbon Democracy. Within three weeks that reign of terror has been revived, with my kinsmen and myself as its most conspicuous victims, although my father was an officer in the Confederate army, and my grandfather and great-grandfather have lived on the same soil where I have expected to rear my children. Our crime consists, not in entering the State as strangers, and usurping its political control, but in venturing to have partisan ties of our own, and to uphold the right of all citizens, white or black, under the constitution, to cast a free vote, and to have it counted."

In describing the bloody affair at Phoenix, during which his brother Tom was shot and mortally wounded, he says, "In the heat of the fight, Etheridge was killed, and the Negroes who had been helping my brother were disabled by wounds, and Tom himself fell with one charge of buckshot in his neck, another in his left side, and a third in his left arm. In spite of his sufferings, he struggled to his feet and turned upon the crowd, saying: "I have not a friend left at my back. You have shot me nearly to death, but you have not changed my politics one iota." What a magnificent exhibition of courage, of manhood was that. Talk about the three hundred who fell at Thermopylae—there isn't any thing finer than that in all history. In the very face of death, shrieking in the ears of his murderers his undying allegiance to what he felt to be right,—“I have not a friend left at my back. You have shot me nearly to death, but you haven't changed my politics one iota.” And what was his politics? The assertion of the right of all citizens, white or black, under the Constitution, to cast a free vote, and to have it counted. Was that a mere empty sentiment with him? Do men expose themselves to danger, to hardships, yea, to death itself, for a mere empty sentiment?

I am encouraged, I say; I see the promise of better things in store for us, in the fact that, in this great Northland, there are men like W. Hayes Ward, Albion W. Tourgee, George W. Cable; and in the

Southland men like the Tolberts of South Carolina. These men will pass from the stage of action; they are already passing, the course of some of them is already nearly run, but others will come up to take their places. This type of men will never be wanting. We are not going to be left to fight our battles alone. The press may remain hostile; a cowardly pulpit may continue to be silent; a hundred thousand ministers of the gospel may continue to put padlocks upon their cowardly lips, in obedience to the demand of a Negro-hating public sentiment, but God will raise up friends for us all the same. In the great struggle against physical bondage, years ago, how he touched the heart and conscience of one and another, here and there: and how they came up from quarters where we least expected. Garrison heard a voice, and Phillips heard a voice, and Sumner heard a voice, and Whittier heard a voice, and Gerritt Smith, and Parker Pillsbury, and Theodore D. Weld, and Lydia Maria Child, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, and a host of others, heard a voice, and were not disobedient to the heavenly call. And in this struggle, hearts will also be touched, and a voice will also be heard, and will not be heard in vain.

I have been speaking now about forty minutes, and do not think I ought to detain you longer. I have not as yet, however, said all that is in my heart. There are a few things more that I would like to say, and which I will take the opportu-

nity of saying on next Sabbath. The subject is a large one, and cannot be disposed of in one or two discourses. The very interest which you have been manifesting in what I have been endeavoring to say, on these successive Sabbaths, has been to me one of the most promising signs of a brighter future: for I am sure it is not the speaker who has drawn you, but your interest in the matter under discussion.



Sermon IV.

God, and Prayer as Factors in the Struggle.

“Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart.”—Psalm 27:14.

IN my discourse on last Sabbath I pointed out five reasons why I was hopeful of a brighter future for us in this land: namely,—the growth of manhood in the Negro,—the growing sense in him of what he is entitled to, and his determination to stand up for his rights; the fact that he is making progress in wealth and education; the certainty that right is ultimately to triumph; the presence of the religion of Jesus Christ in this land, and its power to conquer all prejudices, to break down all walls of separation, and to weld together into one great brotherhood men of all races; and the fact, that both in the North and in the South there are white men and women, who do not believe in the treatment which is accorded to us, and who are in sympathy with us in the fight which we are making.

There are two other grounds of hope to which I desire to direct attention this morning, in closing, and they are the ones pointed out in the words

of our text,—“Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait I say on the Lord.” In the Revised Version, it reads,—“Wait on the Lord: be strong, and let thine heart take courage; yea, wait thou on the Lord.”

The (1) ground of hope to which our attention is here directed is in the fact that God is. The being of God is asserted. There is a God, the Psalmist says. He calls him Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; the God to whom Moses referred when he said to the children of Israel, with the Red Sea before them, and the advancing hosts of the Egyptians behind them, “Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.” Yes God is. This universe is not the result of blind, unconscious forces; back of all that we see is a great intelligence. That intelligence we call God; that is the great Being to whom the Psalmist here refers, to whom he directs attention. God! how important, is the thought. Let us get hold of it: let the idea sink deep into our hearts. It will help us to weather the storms that are before us, and nerve us for the conflicts that await us in our efforts to rise, and in our struggles for recognition against a bitter, Negro-hating spirit of caste. It was this thought,—the thought of God,—that brought hope back to the almost despairing soul of Frederick Douglass, many years ago, during one of the darkest periods of the anti-slavery struggle. You remember the story. It was at a great meeting: Mr.

Douglass was speaking in the most despairing tone. Everything was against us, apparently: there was hardly a ray of light to illumine the darkness as he looked out into the future. He was going on in this dismal strain, when he was interrupted by Sojourner Truth, who said, "Is God dead, Frederick?" That shot a ray of light into his soul, and revived his drooping spirits. God! It is impossible to project that great thought into the mind of man, in any emergency or crisis in his life, without bracing him up, without giving him something to lean upon. It was the prop that Sojourner Truth laid hold upon, and that sustained her during all that long and painful and discouraging struggle through which she passed in the death-grapple with slavery. And it will sustain us, if we will lay hold of it, in the equally momentous struggle through which we are passing.

Higher than man, than all mundane influences, than principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, than even the mightiest names of earth, is a great Being, without beginning of days, or end of years, who knows all things, who has all power, and who is infinite in justice. This great Being is on the throne of the universe; he holds the scepter of universal empire. Because God reigns, there is hope for the oppressed, for the down-trodden, for all upon whose necks the iron heel of oppression rests. There need be no fear as to the ultimate result, as to the final issue. Hence the language

of the Psalmist, "The Lord reigneth." The very thought thrills him, and he calls upon the whole earth to rejoice. "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad. Clouds and darkness are around about him: righteousness and judgment are the foundation of his throne." In that fact he sees ultimately the righting of all wrongs, the breaking of all yokes, and the oppressed going free. If the Devil was on the throne of the universe, there would be no such ground of rejoicing; no such hope could possibly exist. But he is not on the throne. It is true he is called the "God of this world," and at times would seem to be all powerful in it, but it is only apparent. There is but one supreme power in the universe; and to that power one day every knee is to bow, and every tongue confess. There has been no abdication on the part of God. Because wrong goes on, it doesn't mean that everything has been turned over to the evil one; that wrongs are never to be righted. No, there is a Just One, who never slumbers nor sleeps, and who is not indifferent to what is going on. He will one day "make requisition for blood." Isaiah tells us that "righteousness is the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins."

The thought in the mind of the Psalmist, as expressed in the words of the text, is,—Keep that great Being in mind; don't lose sight of him,—of the fact that he is, and what he is. And the

promise is, "He shall strengthen thine heart," he will hold you up, will keep you from becoming utterly cast down; will put new life and energy and hope in you; will bring you out more than conqueror. Isaiah expresses the same thought in the fortieth chapter of his prophecy. "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Take away this idea of God; banish the thought of such a being, and the outlook would, indeed, be dismal. But it cannot be done: everywhere it meets us. In external nature we see traces of his footsteps. "The heavens declare his glory, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork," and in the inner world, in the deeper recesses of our own natures, we see in the still small voice of conscience a witness to his existence. Yes, God is, and because he is, there is hope for the oppressed Negro in this land. The Lord of all the earth will see that right is done.

“Careless seems the great Avenger; history’s pages but record
One death grapple in the darkness ’twixt old systems and the
Word;

Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne,—
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim un-
known,

Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his
own.”

(2). The ground of hope,—understanding by the expression, “Wait on the Lord,” the formal presentation of our case to him with a view to his interposition,—is to be found in the efficacy of prayer. Prayer is a power. It is a mighty power. It is one of the mightiest forces in the universe. It is Tennyson who says,—

“More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of.”

And a greater than Tennyson has said, “In nothing be anxious; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Jesus Christ.” The Bible is full of illustrations of the power of prayer. When God appeared unto Moses in the burning bush, he said to him, “I have surely seen the afflictions of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters.” What was that cry? It was the cry to high heaven that went up from his suffering people. And God says, “I have heard their cry, and am come down

to deliver them." In the time of Hezekiah, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, we are told, sent Rabshakeh with a great army to Jerusalem, to besiege it. The record is, "Then Rabshakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language and spake, saying, Hear ye the word of the great king of Assyria. Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you; for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand: neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, The Lord will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Hearken not unto Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make your peace with me, and come out to me; and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern; until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive, and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The Lord will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations ever delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivvah? have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?"

But we are told that Hezekiah went into the house of the Lord and prayed: and what a prayer it was, "O Lord, the God of Israel, that sitteth upon the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. Incline thine ear, O Lord, and hear; open thine eyes, O Lord, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, wherewith he hath sent him to reproach the living God. Of a truth, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone; therefore they have destroyed them. Now, therefore, O Lord, our God, save thou us, I beseech thee, out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only." And you remember what the result was: the prophet Isaiah was instructed to say to the king that his request would be granted:—"Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib, king of Assyria, I have heard thee." So when the angel of the Lord appeared to Zacharias, the declaration was, "Fear not, Zacharias: because thy supplication is heard, and thy wife, Elizabeth, shall bear thee a son." And did not Jesus himself say, "Ask, and it shall be given unto you?" And in James v: 17, 18, is it not recorded:—"Elijah was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain: and

it rained not on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again; and the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”

There is nothing clearer in the Word of God than the fact that there is power in prayer, that, through it, effects may be produced, that definite results may be accomplished. This power may be made to play an important part in the great struggle through which we are passing in this country. It played a most important part, I believe, in the struggle out of bondage into freedom. We speak of the labors of Garrison and Sumner and Phillips, and the whole host of anti-slavery agitators; we speak of the Emancipation Proclamation, and of the clash of arms, as agents in bringing about the final result: and they were most important agents,—too much cannot be said in praise of all that was done, of the magnificent fight that was made by our soldiers in the face of rebel bullets, and by the reformers on the bloodless fields of thought and sentiment,—of the moral heroism and physical courage that were displayed. But the poor slave himself, I believe, had a part in that struggle second to none; it was the part which he played on his knees. In the rude cabins of the South, in lonely places, in the seclusion of the forest, in the darkness of the night, the voice of the slave was heard in piteous appeals to heaven. When they were hoeing in the cotton field, when the crack of the overseer’s whip was sounding in their ears, when their backs were

smarting under the lash of the hard taskmaster, when they stood upon the auction block, when families were broken up,—the father going in one direction, the mother in another, and the children in still another,—there went up from their bleeding hearts the cry to heaven, “How long, O Lord, how long?” Every day, every night, almost every hour in every day, the cry of their bleeding hearts was poured into the ear of heaven. And I believe, as mighty as were the other influences, there was none more potential than this. Prayer was their only weapon at that time, and how mightily did they wield it. And we know with what result. The answer came at last, and they went out from under the yoke of bondage, free men and free women; went out, after wrestling earnestly in prayer with God for deliverance. The God, who said to Moses, “I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt, and have heard their cry, and am come down to deliver them, came down in answer to the prayers that went up from the rude cabins of the South, from the cane-brakes and the rice fields, and the cotton patches, and brought deliverance. And this same power is available to-day. Lawless ruffians may keep the Negro away from the polls by shot-guns; and by unrighteous laws and intimidation may shut him out of first-class cars, but there is no power by which all the combined forces of evil in the South can keep him from approaching the throne of grace. Here is one thing, thank God,

that this Negro-hating spirit cannot do,—it cannot prevent him from praying. What is prayer?

“Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire,
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near.”

Thank God, I say, this lawless, murderous, Negro-hating spirit that is running riot in the South, that unblushingly flaunts its shame in the face of the civilized world, while it may murder Negroes, and despoil them of their civil and political rights, cannot prevent them from lifting their eyes to heaven, or breathing a prayer: nor can it shut the ears of heaven to their cries. It may shut the ears of a cowardly pulpit, and a prejudiced church, but there its power stops. It cannot block the way of approach to the Holy of Holies. God has opened the way, and no man can shut it: all the powers of darkness cannot do it. Into that august presence the Negro may come, black though he may be, ignorant though he may be, poor though he may be, with the same assurance of acceptance as the whitest, the most cultivated, the most wealthy.

What use shall we make of this power? Shall we allow it to remain dormant, unused? Shall we not avail ourselves of this privilege? Shall we not

begin, in earnest, to ask God to take a hand in this struggle in which we are engaged? It is a suggestion that is well worthy of our most serious consideration. In addition to what we are already doing, we should add this power of prayer; should make our troubles more a subject of prayer than we do. Some seven years ago this thought was brought to our attention, as some of you will remember. The idea originated, I believe, with Peter H. Clark, and after consultation, an address was issued "To the Colored People of the United States and Their Friends," calling upon them to set apart a day for special prayer. After setting forth the sad condition of our people, the unjust discriminations against us, the brutal manner in which we are treated in the South, and the seeming inability or indisposition of those in authority to protect us, it closes in these words: "To whom, then, can we turn, save to the Lord God; to him who has the power to enlighten and soften men's hearts; to him, who brought Israel out of bondage with many signs and wonders; to him, who recently in the history of our country caused the wrath of man to praise him, and forced from the unwilling hand of Abraham Lincoln the Emancipation Proclamation. Let us turn to him:—

We therefore request you to set aside the thirty-first day of May next as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer. Let the more devout fast faithfully. Let all pray. Let the farmer leave his

plough, the mechanic his bench, the business man his shop, let the schoolmaster secure for himself and pupils a vacation, let those employed as household servants get leave of absence.

Let us meet in our places of worship, and there, led by our ministers, devoutly pray to Almighty God: First, That if it is our fault that the hearts of our fellow countrymen are so cruelly turned against us, He will show us the evil, and give us the wisdom to remove it. Second: That our white fellow citizens may be made to see that the only security for the continuance of Republican institutions is found in the observance of law by all, however powerful, and by the extension of its protection to all, however weak; that he will make them see that in permitting these lynchings they are sowing a wind which will grow a whirlwind in the time of their children.

Finally, that they will remember our lately enslaved condition, that they will not forget our centuries of toil without requital upon the fields of their fathers, and that instead of visiting us with proscription and murder, they will be patient with our short-comings and encourage us to rise to that level of intelligence and virtue which marks the character of a good citizen."

This address was signed by Peter H. Clark, Frederick Douglass, Bishops Daniel A. Payne, Benjamin T. Tanner, and A. W. Wayman, Booker T. Washington, J. C. Price, Albion W. Tourgee, T. Thomas

Fortune, W. S. Scarborough, Frances E. Harper, George T. Downing, John M. Langston, and many other representative men and women. It was printed, I believe, in all of the colored newspapers throughout the country, and was very generally observed. Hundreds and thousands of our people met in their respective places of worship, and gave themselves up to prayer. It attracted very wide attention: it was noticed in many of the leading journals of the country. In an editorial in the New York Evangelist of June 2nd, the editor, in commenting upon it, said, "The fact that the colored people of the United States spent Tuesday of this week as a day of fasting and prayer to Almighty God, that he would deliver their race from persecution and injustice, and grant them the free enjoyment of life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness and full protection in their persons, homes, and in the exercise of all legal rights and privileges in every part of the American Union, is one that may well give Christians pause. It is a solemn thing when seven millions of souls, however poor and humble they may be, carry their appeal from man's injustice to the bar of the Almighty. It is a serious matter for a nation when any body of people, however few, betake themselves not to revolt, but to prayer."

This is a line of attack upon our enemies that we cannot afford to lose sight of. I do most earnestly wish, therefore, that the suggestion which was

made in the address which was issued nearly seven years ago might be revived. And, that in addition to the setting apart a day annually for prayer in our churches, all believers might be urged to bring the matter to the attention of God, also in their private devotions. Praying only once a year won't do; praying in public and by the ministers only won't do; there must be constant prayer, every day, and by all of God's people. In the church, in our Endeavor meetings, in our Sabbath school gatherings, at the family altar, and in the secret chamber, on week days and Sabbath days, by clergy and laity,—the whole religious strength of the race ought to be brought to bear upon the subject, the cry that goes up to heaven ought to be the cry of a united people, of all who believe in God and in the power of prayer.

What are we to pray for? For self-effacement, political or otherwise? No. For a cowardly and unmanly spirit of submission to outrage, without entering a protest? No. For quiet acquiescence in the desire to keep us poor and ignorant, mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, to make of us a mere servile race? No, emphatically no. What are we to pray for, then? (1). That God would help us by His grace to be true men and women; that He would put deep down into our souls a divine unrest, a holy ambition to be something, and to make something of ourselves; that He would kindle in our heart of hearts a desire

for the things that are true, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report; that he would help us all to come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. What we need is development along every line that makes for righteousness, for a better, purer, nobler manhood and womanhood. It is our duty to pray to God to help us, to put his great, strong arm under us while we struggle up the steep and difficult ascent

“on stepping stones
Of our dead selves to higher things.”

We have faults, of course, and very serious ones: this no one has ever denied. It would be strange if we had not, after two hundred and fifty years of slavery, an institution which attached no importance whatever to virtue, and which ignored entirely the family idea. The very purpose of slavery was to make the Negro a mere beast of burden, to degrade him to the level of the brute. That anything was left in him, upon which to rear the superstructure of a self-respecting manhood and womanhood, is the marvel. The white race itself is not free from faults. It has had more than a thousand years of culture and civilization behind it, and yet it has faults, and very serious ones. If I were disposed to draw an indictment against it, I think I could draw a very strong one, one that would not be very flattering to its pride. I think

the faults of the Negro, measured by the divine standard, are not a whit worse than those of the whites. In many respects their sins are the same. The Negro is said to be licentious; well, so are the whites. Are all white men paragons of virtue? Where did all the mulattoes in the South come from? Were the old masters forced by their black slaves to part with their virtue, or was the reverse true? Were the slaves the aggressors, or the masters? And to-day, the South, that holds up its hands in holy horror at the thought of miscegenation, thinks nothing of the illicit intercourse between white men and colored women. In the last Constitutional Convention of South Carolina, Section 34 of the new Constitution reads as follows: "The marriage of a white person with a Negro or with a mulatto, or person who shall have one-eighth or more of Negro blood, shall be unlawful and void." To this section, the Hon. Robert Smalls proposed an amendment, adding after the word "void," in the second line, the words, "and any white person who lives and cohabits with a Negro, mulatto, or person who shall have one-eighth or more of Negro blood, shall be disqualified from holding any office of emolument or trust in this State, and the offspring of any such living or cohabiting shall bear the name of the father, and shall be entitled to inherit and acquire property the same as if they were legitimate."

In support of this amendment, Mr. Smalls said, among other things: "This entire matter, sir, has no right in the Constitution of the State. If your women are as pure as you stated, and I have reason to believe that they are, they can be trusted; then why the necessity of this being placed in the Constitution? Can you not trust yourselves? Is it because these wrongs that have been perpetrated here since the formation of the government, make you feel that you cannot be trusted? When I say you, I mean the white men of the entire State. I fear not; hence I trust the amendment will be adopted. These wrongs have been done, and are still being done. They are not done by colored men; they are done by white men. If a Negro should improperly approach a white woman, his body would be hanging on the nearest tree, filled with airholes, before daylight next morning, and, perhaps, properly so. If the same rule were applied on the other side, and white men who insulted or debauched Negro women were treated likewise, this convention would have to be adjourned sine die for lack of a quorum." At this point he was called to order by some member on the floor, to which he made this reply: "The gentleman called me to order, stating that I had reflected on the convention. I do not wish to reflect on the convention, but do say, that if he has clean hands, he will keep his seat, because I do mean to reflect on any man who objects to the intermar-

riage of a Negro or a mulatto woman with a white man, and is not willing to prohibit the cohabitation, which is the root and branch of the evil. Stop this evil, and there will be no occasion for your intermarriage law." And yet, in the face of this pointed speech, incredible as it may seem, the amendment was defeated: every white man voting against it. That proves conclusively, of course, that licentiousness is a sin peculiar to the Negro, that white men are never guilty of violating the Seventh Commandment.

Another charge made against the Negro is that he will steal: that is also a sin peculiar to the race. White men never steal, of course. Who are all these absconding bank cashiers and other trusted officials that I read of from time to time in the newspapers? Are they white men or colored men? Who are the men who adulterate our food products, who run up prices by forming iniquitous combinations of various kinds, and in this way, by overcharging, rob the consumers of millions of dollars? Are they white men or colored men? The only difference that I can see between the two races is, that the one steals on a small scale, the other on a large scale,—the one takes a few dollars, or a few dollars' worth, the other takes hundreds and thousands of dollars. The one kind of stealing is regarded, I know, as more respectable than the other, but it is stealing all the same. It is safe to conclude that stealing is as much a peculiarity of one race as the other.

One of the things that I have never been able to understand, is the lofty, self-complacent air with which the white man deals with the faults and imperfections of the Negro. It is always on the assumption that he is all right, and that the Negro is all wrong. It never seems to occur to him that he has any faults at all; if he happens to be guilty of the same offence, it becomes very much less heinous in him. A violation of the Seventh Commandment makes the Negro a low brute; the white man, especially if it happens to be with a woman not of his own race, still remains a gentleman, is guilty only of a little indiscretion. Who ever heard, in all the Southland, with its boasted civilization, and its hypocritical cant about the fear of contamination with an inferior race, of a white man being ostracised, shut out from respectable society, because of his known intimacy with a woman of color? That kind of thing, according to the moral standard in vogue there, is either not regarded as a sin, or is winked at.

The white man seems to be surprised that the Negro is not perfect, that he is not a paragon of all the virtues; he is constantly abusing him, applying all kinds of vile epithets to him, because he is no better than he is. Of course, he isn't perfect. It is unreasonable to expect him to be perfect. You can't perfect a race in a single generation: and nobody knows that better than the white man himself; and he of all men ought to

be the last one to upbraid him. Yes, the Negro has faults, but that is no reason why he should be shot down like a dog, why his rights, civil and political, should be trampled in the dust, why he should be treated in the brutal and inhuman manner in which he has been treated in the South. You can't make him a better man by that kind of treatment. If you think he needs reforming, if you want to improve his condition, you have got to use other methods, you have got to come to him in a different spirit. You can't play the part of the bully, the ruffian, and hope to have any influence with him for good; you can't put your foot on his neck, deny his manhood, treat him as an inferior, as fit only to be a servant, and hope to have him profit by anything that you may say to him. He may be helped, he needs help, but you have got to clear out of his way the bloody murderers that throw themselves athwart his pathway, you have got to set him a better example. If the white man wants to help the Negro to be a better man, he must begin to be a better man himself, to stop all of his meanness. After that bloody, murderous, treasonable assault at Wilmington upon law and order and the most sacred rights of man, it was one of the paragons of the pulpit in that city, even the great Doctor Hoge, who said: "Now having cast out Negro leaders, let us prove to the Negroes that we are really their true friends. We must look more closely after their industrial

education, and by precept and example must teach them the gospel of Christ as a religion, not of emotion, but of life and conduct." Is there any wonder that the Negro is no better than he is with such examples before him, with such beautiful exponents of Christianity for his guide? Men holding themselves up as examples, who the day before had dyed their hands in their brothers blood.

But to return from this digression,—in laying hold of this mighty instrument of prayer in relation to ourselves, let us not forget that we have shortcomings, that we are not by any means all that we ought to be, and that God can help us to overcome the evil that is in us, to break the fetters of sin that bind us, and make us freemen indeed. The individual who lays hold of God, in the struggle upward against his lower nature, is sure to succeed. And so with a race; when it begins reaching out after God in earnest prayer for strength to overcome its besetting sins, it is sure to prevail. Pray? Yes, let us pray, pray without ceasing, that God would not only help us to build ourselves up in the great and positive elements that go to make up a true manhood and womanhood, but also that he would help us with his own great might to resist with all the energy of our natures the things which stand in the way of our progress, which tend to drag us down. Prayer can help us in this struggle,—let us lay hold of it. Let us make the most of it. But (2) in praying

we must not stop with self, we must not forget to pray also for those who are oppressing us, who have their heels upon our necks, and whose cry is this is a white man's government. Jesus himself says, "Pray for them which despitefully use and persecute you." An elder in the Mormon church was once reminded that it was his duty to pray for his enemies: he said, "I do pray for them, I pray that God would damn them and send them down to hell." That is what we would naturally be inclined to do; that is what doubtless many of us have often done; but that is not the kind of prayer that I am talking about: It never can be right for us to pray such a prayer. We are to pray that God would have mercy upon them; that he would open their blind eyes, that he would show them the error of their ways, that he would quicken their dead consciences, and soften their hard hearts, and lead them to conform to principles of right, of justice and humanity. Prayer can do wonders in this respect. You remember how Esau felt towards Jacob: he hated him with perfect hatred, he had murder in his heart: he would have killed him had he met him at the time. And even after the lapse of twenty years, the old feeling was still there. When he heard of his return, he started to meet him with a strong band of armed men. Poor Jacob was terrified, and fell upon his knees in earnest prayer to God for deliverance. "And Jacob said, O God of my father

Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which said unto me, Return into thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee, I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast showed to thy servant, for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands. Deliver me I pray thee from the hand of my brother Esau; for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children." And with what result we all know. The record is, "And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold Esau came, and with him four hundred men." And what? There was a conflict, and Jacob and his whole family were annihilated? Not at all. "And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept." All the old grudge, the old bitterness and hatred, were taken out of him, and love,—beautiful, tender, sympathetic love,—took its place. A mighty transformation was wrought in answer to prayer. The two brothers, long estranged, were again brought together on terms of friendship: we see them in each other's arms, weeping on each other's necks. And in this there is a hint for us as a people in our relations with the Southern whites. We can do, in our imperiled condition among them, just what Jacob did in the dire emergency which confronted him,—betake ourselves to prayer: and the same God who interposed to soften the heart of Esau, will also interpose in our behalf.

How are we to pray? In what spirit are we to pray? We are to pray,—whether for ourselves or for the Southern whites,—if we are to succeed, in the same humble, earnest, persistent, and loving spirit that Jacob did. He came to God in the attitude of an humble suppliant, in the consciousness of his own weakness and imperfections. “I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies,” is the opening sentence of his appeal. It was not in the spirit of self-righteousness, but of humble penitence that he came: so must we.

He came to God in a spirit of deep earnestness. His whole soul cried unto God for deliverance from his brother Esau. It came up from the great depths of his nature, and expressed a need that was most keenly felt by him: so it must be with us.

He came to God in the spirit of resolute determination to get what he wanted. All night he wrestled with God in prayer. And as the day began to dawn, the angel said, “Let me go, Jacob;” but his reply was, “I will not let thee go till thou bless me:” And he did not let him go until he had the assurance that he had prevailed; so must we. If we are not in earnest, dead in earnest, are not animated by a spirit that will not take nay as an answer, we cannot, will not succeed.

He came to God in the spirit of love: there is no evidence of any bitterness or hatred on his part towards his brother. This was the spirit exhibited by the Lord Jesus upon the cross when He prayed,

“Father, forgive them,”—his murderers, the men who had nailed Him to the cross, and who were looking on with fiendish delight as his life was ebbing away; and the spirit that was exhibited by Stephen, while he was being stoned to death, when he said: “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” And this is the spirit in which we must come to God. It is not an easy thing to do, I admit. When we think of all that we have suffered and are still suffering in the South,—of the hundreds and thousands of our people who have been shot down, murdered in cold blood, and of all the other villainous acts that have been perpetrated upon us, with a view of humiliating us, of crushing the manhood out of us, it is very difficult not to feel some bitterness, not to be full of hate. But if we are to have any influence with God, in this matter, we have got to get rid of that feeling. God will not answer our prayers, if we come in any such spirit. And, therefore, I am especially anxious that this element of prayer should enter into the great problem which we are seeking to solve in this country, for our own sakes, as well as for the sake of the whites. It will do them good to have us pray for them, and it will do us good to pray for them, since it will have the effect, if we enter into it with the purpose and determination of succeeding, of rooting out of our hearts that bitterness, which these awful outrages which are constantly occurring in the South tend to engender. It will be a good thing for us as a race, if we can get into an attitude

of prayer, and keep in that attitude. It will put us in touch with God, and keep us in touch with Him. And then, the gates of hell will not be able to prevail against us.

I believe in the reality of prayer. I believe in the power of prayer. I believe that our cause can be helped by prayer. This doesn't mean that we are to do nothing but pray, that we are to fold our arms and expect God to fight our battles for us: nor does it mean that we are not to stand up for our rights, that we are not to agitate, and protest against wrong,—the agitation must go on; the demand which we are making for equal recognition of our rights, civil and political, under the Constitution, must never be relinquished,—what it means is, that in the midst of the conflict, while we are doing all we can, while we are seeking to make the most of ourselves and of our opportunities, we are at the same time to lay fast hold of the Almighty, to keep ourselves and our wants ever before Him, and to look to Him for help in every time of need. "Wait on the Lord," is the exhortation; look to Him for strength, for courage, for wisdom to guide, to direct: in a word, don't attempt to lift this great weight that is pressing upon you, and holding you down, in this country, in your own strength; don't attempt to fight your battles alone, with human instruments alone; link yourself with God, take Him into your confidence; look to Him, rely upon Him.

With this wonderful thought before us,—the thought that in this struggle through which we are

passing in this country, it is possible to have the Almighty associated with us,—together with the encouraging signs to which our attention was directed on last Sabbath, if I am asked, What of the night, for the Negro race in this country? I say, unhesitatingly, Well. There is a future here for us; in this land there are better things in store for us.

“Out of the dark the circling sphere
Is rounding onward to the light;
We see not yet the full day here,
But we do see the paling light;

And Hope, that lights her fadeless fires,
And Faith, that shines, a heavenly will,
And Love, that courage re-inspires,—
These stars have been above us still.

O sentinels whose tread we heard
Through long hours, when we could not see,
Pause now; exchange with cheer the word,—
The unchanging watchword, Liberty.

Look backward, how much has been won!
Look round, how much is yet to win!
The watchers of the night are done;
The watchers of the day begin.

O Thou, whose mighty patience holds
The night and day alike in view,
Thy will our dearest hope enfolds:
O keep us steadfast, patient, true.”

I have had a three-fold object in preaching these sermons: (1.) To let the white people know that we are conscious of what our rights are, and that we mean to have them. (2.) The hope of helping

to awaken the sleeping conscience of the American people to the wrongs that we are suffering. And (3) to inspire those of our own people, who may be disposed to become despondent, with hope and with renewed determination to keep up the struggle.

I thank you for the patience with which you have listened to me during these weeks: and trust that all of us realize, as we have never done before, the seriousness of the task that is before us. The uplifting of a race, with all the tremendous odds against us in this land, is no child's play. It requires work, hard work; true and brave hearts:—

“Men of faith, and not of faction,
Men of lofty aim in action,
Strong and stalwart ones;
Men whom highest hope inspires,
Men whom purest honor fires,
Men who trample self beneath them,
Men who never fail their brothers,
True, however false are others.”

May God make us such men and women: and to this work may we, one and all, dedicate ourselves to-day. Whatever we can do, as individuals, as families, as churches, to lift ourselves, and this race with which we are identified, to higher levels, let us do it, and do it with our might.

“O small beginnings, ye are great and strong,
Based on a faithful heart and weariless brain.”

And these we must have,—“the faithful heart, and the weariless brain,” if we are to “build the future fair, and conquer wrong.”

